THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1955

THE GREEN BOTTLE—A "TROMPE L'ŒIL."
BY TRISTRAM HILLIER — By Courtesy of Southampton Art Gallery

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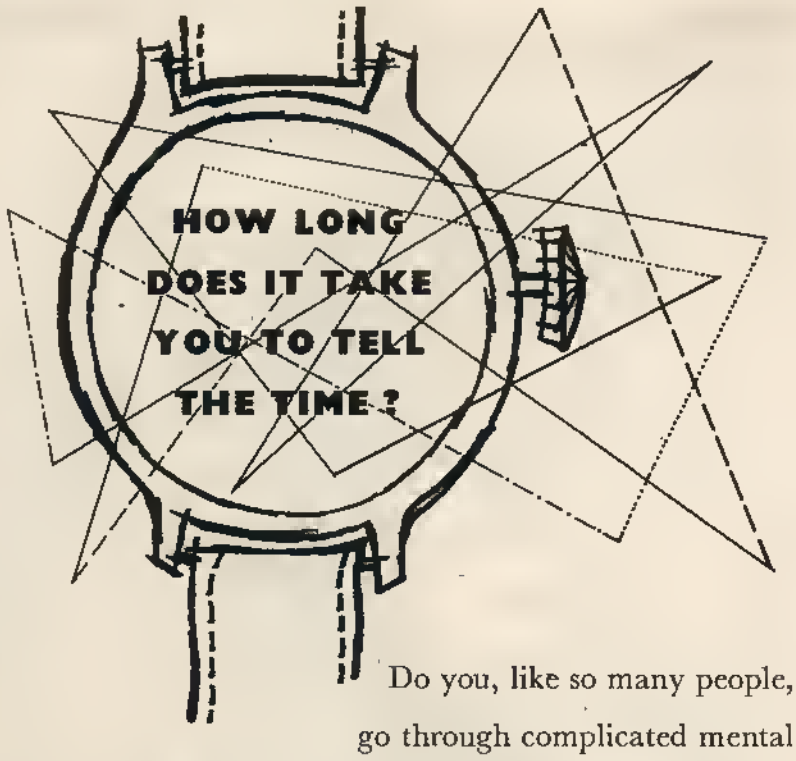

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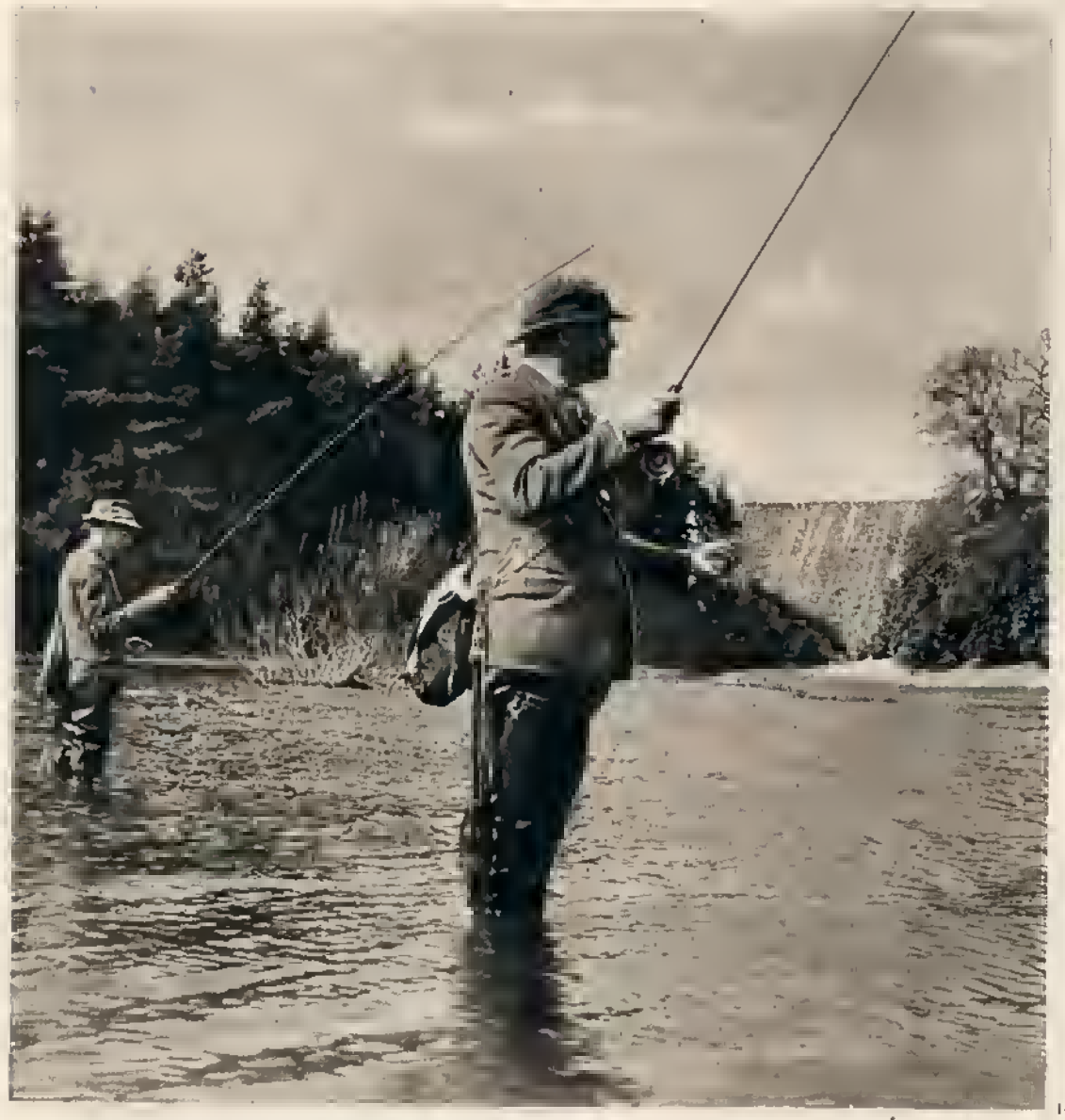

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A Luncheon Engagement — *from the original water colour by Ernest Uden*

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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS
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A REMARKABLE STUDY IN TONES OF WHITE—"THE WHITE DUCK"
BY JEAN-BAPTISTE OUDRY (1686-1755). [CANVAS 37¼ BY 24¾ INS.]
Reproduced by courtesy of the Marchioness of Cholmondeley.

"JOHN, 3RD DUKE OF ATHOLL, AND HIS FAMILY"; BY JOHANN ZOFFANY, R.A. (1734/35-1810). A CONVERSATION PIECE WITH A LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND OF THE RIVER TAY AT DUNKELD, AND A PET LEMUR CLIMBING A TREE. (*Canvas; 36¾ by 62¼ ins.*) [*Reproduced by courtesy of the Duke of Atholl.*]

"SIR ROBERT AND LADY BUXTON AND THEIR DAUGHTER, ANNE"; BY HENRY WALTON (1746-1813). A DOMESTIC INTERIOR BY A NORFOLK-BORN ARTIST WHO STUDIED UNDER ZOFFANY. (*Canvas; 29 by 36 ins.*) [*Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the late Mrs. Maud J. Buxton.*]

THE JOYS OF HAPPY FAMILY LIFE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND.

Family happiness and parental pride are beautifully depicted in the two conversation pieces we reproduce on this page. Nothing could be jollier than the afternoon which the 3rd Duke of Atholl and his Duchess (formerly Charlotte, Baroness Strange, Peerage of England, created 1628), who was his cousin, the only daughter of the 2nd Duke of Atholl, are spending on the banks of the Tay with their numerous children; and Sir Robert and Lady Buxton are obviously very happy in their sitting-room, with their little girl, their books and Lady Buxton's needlework in a frame on the table. Zoffany's receipt for the Atholl group is dated "London, 16th Jan., 1767" and acknowledges payment in full of 180 guineas for a "Family Picture of nine figures at twenty guineys each." According to Williamson ("Conversation Pieces") the landscape of the Tay was painted by Charles Steuart.

TRAFALGAR FROM THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

The Report of Captain Lucas, Officer of the Legion of Honour, on the action fought by, and the loss of the "Redoutable," which he commanded at the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805, and from which was fired the shot which killed Nelson.

IN this report, I shall not attempt to indicate the manœuvres of the two fleets at the time that they met, nor even those which took place during the engagement. I shall limit myself to reporting those matters which concern the position of the *Redoutable* and the combat she sustained, both in the matter of the engaging with gunfire and the boarding of the *Victory*, of 110 guns, in which was Admiral Nelson, the *Temeraire*, also of 110 guns, and a third of two decks of which I do not know the name nor exact number of guns. [*See illustrations on pages* 14-15] As it was, once the engagement had begun, it was impossible to see the ships which surrounded me, and I shall limit myself to recounting what I was able to see with absolute certainty.

At this point, I shall recall several small incidents which took place on board during the encounter, as they will serve to make known the degree of intrepidity and valour of the brave sailors and marines whom I had the honour to command. I believe it will not be unprofitable to make known some of the main dispositions that had been taken with the battle in mind and the degree of instruction of the crew, especially in the matter of boarding, as it will prove up to what point we could count on that mode of fighting which will always assure us victory whenever we undertake it with a well-trained crew. Since the *Redoutable* had been commissioned, nothing had been neglected on board to instruct her people in all kinds of exercises; my thoughts had always turned on boarding parties; I relied on their success and everything had been applied to make them effective; with this in view I had canvas wallets made to contain two grenades for all my captains of guns; and to the strap of each wallet was attached a tin tube containing a small fuse. In all our exercises, I had a large quantity of cardboard grenades hurled, and I often took the grenadiers ashore to have iron grenades exploded before them; they had become so used to throwing them that on the day of the battle our topmen were throwing them two at a time. I had 100 muskets on board, fitted with long bayonets; the men who carried them had been so well trained in their use that they climbed half-way up the shrouds to let them off; all the men carrying cutlasses were trained in sword-play daily and were also fully conversant with the use of pistols; the boarding grapnels were being thrown with such skill that we were able to board a ship which was by no means touching us. In hand-to-hand fighting, arms were being loaded and each man took the one he was meant to have, went to his station and placed it near a gun by an aperture between the timbers. Finally, the men themselves were so confident in the practice of this method of fighting that they often requested me to board the first vessel we came up against.

His Imperial and Royal Majesty's ship *Redoutable*, 74 guns, commanded by Captain Lucas, Officer of the Legion of Honour, shown directing her bowsprit towards the stern of *Bucentaure*, flagship of the Admiral Villeneuve, to defeat the design of Admiral Nelson who, in his flagship, the English ship *Victory*, 120 guns, was manœuvring to cut the line of the Combined French Fleet. [*A free translation of the inscription on the French print.*]

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Musee de la Marine, Paris.

On October 20th, 1805, in the forenoon, the two fleets were in sight of each other; the enemy, to windward, were in two columns, the combined fleet to leeward, without order, but attempting to form a line of battle in inverse order. By this movement, the signal for which had just been made, the *Redoutable* was to be the third ship astern of the flagship *Bucentaure*. In consequence, I hastened to take up my station astern of that ship, leaving between her and myself the space necessary for the two ships which were to precede me; the one was not far distant from her position, but the other was not manœuvring to take up hers and was considerably to leeward of the line that was being formed ahead of the admiral.

Towards 11 o'clock in the morning of the 21st the two columns of the enemy fleet bore down on our fleet; the one, led by the three-decker *Royal Sovereign*, in which was Vice-Admiral Collingwood, was making for our rear, the other, led by the *Victory*, of 110 guns, in which was Admiral Nelson, and the *Temeraire*, also of 110 guns, was making for the centre of our line. At 11.15 a.m., the ships of our rear opened fire on the British ship *Royal Sovereign*; from afar, this ship fired a few shots at us, to which I was disinclined to reply. I was still in the wake of the French Admiral, but between him and me there was a gap which was still not being closed by the two ships that were to place themselves ahead of me; the one was too far to leeward to be able to do so, and the other which I have mentioned as being not far distant had moved over too far in order to fire at the *Royal Sovereign*, which was just over half a gunshot distant. The column led by Admiral Nelson was steadily approaching our centre: the two three-deckers which led it were obviously manœuvring to envelop the French admiral's ship; one of them was trying to sail past her stern; as soon as her intention became clear to me, and being certain, moreover, that my two consorts ahead would not be able to take up their stations, I directed the bowsprit of the *Redoutable* towards the stern of the *Bucentaure*, fully determined to sacrifice my ship in order to defend the flagship; of this intention I informed my officers and men, who responded to my call with a thousand-fold shout of "Long live the Emperor! Long live our Captain!" led by the drums and fifes which were on board. I placed myself at the head of my staff and visited the various decks; everywhere I found brave men burning with impatience to engage in combat; several said to me: "Captain, do not forget the boarding."

At 11.30 a.m., the Combined Fleet hoisted their colours; those of the *Redoutable* were hoisted in an imposing manner, the drums rolling, the musketeers presenting arms; they were saluted by the staff officers, and the crew gave seven shouts of "Long live the Emperor!"

At 11.45 a.m., the enemy column which was approaching our part of the line having come within range, the *Bucentaure* and her consort ahead opened fire on the *Victory*. I called most of the captains of the guns to the quarterdeck to point out to them how badly our ships were firing. All their shot struck too low or fell short. I impressed upon them the need of firing so as to dismast the enemy, and above all of aiming properly.

At 11.45 a.m., the *Redoutable* opened fire with a single shot from the lower deck, which cut through the fore-topsail yard of the *Victory*, which was still steering straight toward the fore part of the *Redoutable*; a shout of joy went up throughout the ship, and our fire was well sustained; in less than 10 minutes' time, our enemy had lost her mizzen top-mast and her main topgallant masts. I still kept so close to the *Bucentaure* that I received repeated warnings from her stern gallery that we were going to run foul of her. In fact, the bowsprit of the *Redoutable* grazed her taffrail, but I assured her that there was nothing to fear. The damage which the *Victory* had sustained had no effect on the audacity of Admiral Nelson's manœuvre, as he still persisted in attempting to cut through our line ahead of the *Redoutable*, and was threatening to board us if we dared oppose him; the immediate proximity of this three-decker, which was closely followed by the *Temeraire*, a ship of equal strength, far from intimidating our intrepid crew, on the contrary merely raised their courage, and to prove to the British Admiral that we were not in the least scared of him boarding us, I had the grapnels hoisted to every yard arm. Finally, the *Victory* having failed to pass astern of the French Admiral, she boarded us on the port beam in such a way that our poop was at the level of her quarterdeck; in this position the grappling irons were thrown across her bulwarks; these were cut away aft, but forward they held; our broadsides were fired point blank, and resulted in an appalling carnage; we continued firing at one another for some time; we succeeded in reloading a number of guns and by means of the fire-arms we had placed near the guns, we were able to prevent the enemy from reloading theirs, so that their fire ceased. What a day of victory this would have been for the *Redoutable* had she had to contend only with the *Victory*! The enemy guns having ceased to reply, I noticed that the enemy were preparing to board us, as their men were crowding on to the upper decks. I had the trumpets sounded, a signal familiar to us from our training exercises, to call the boarding parties; they came on deck in such impeccable order, led by their officers and midshipmen, that it might have been thought a figment of the imagination. In less than a minute our decks were covered with men who were hurling themselves toward the poop, the bulwarks and into the shrouds: it was impossible to take note of individual bravery. Thereupon began a combat

[*Continued overleaf.*

Le Vaisseau de S.M.I. & R. le Redoutable de 74 canons, Commandé par le Capitaine de Vaisseau Lucas, Officier de la légion d'Honneur
Combattant à l'abordage le Vaisseau anglais le Victory de 120 canons monté par l'Amiral Nelson qui fut Tué dans cet engagement sans avoir
pu parvenir à couper la ligne de l'Armée Combinée à poupe et l'Amiral français.

His Imperial and Royal Majesty's ship *Redoutable*, 74 guns, commanded by Captain Lucas, Officer of the Legion of Honour, boarding the English ship *Victory*, 120 guns, the flagship of Admiral Nelson, who was killed in this engagement without having been able to cut the line of the Combined Fleet of the French Admiral.

[A free translation of the inscription on the French print.]

Continued.]

of musketry, in which Admiral Nelson was fighting at the head of his men ; our fire was so superior that in less than 15 minutes we had silenced that of the *Victory* ; more than 200 grenades were hurled on to her decks, with a high degree of success : her upper deck was littered with dead and wounded ; Admiral Nelson was killed by the fire of our musketry. Immediately thereupon, the enemy decks were evacuated and the *Victory* ceased fighting us ; but it was difficult to board her on account of the movements of the two ships and also because of the greater height of her third deck. I gave orders to have the slings of the mainyard cut and to lower it so that it might be used as a bridge ; Midshipman Zon and four sailors had already made their way to the *Victory* by means of the *Victory's* anchor, and informed us that her decks were deserted ; but just as our brave men were about to hurl themselves forward to join them, the three-decker *Temeraire*, which no doubt had observed that the *Victory* had ceased resistance and would indubitably be made a prize, came with all sail set upon our starboard beam and fired at us point blank with her whole broadside ; it would be difficult to describe the extent of the carnage caused by this murderous broadside from that ship, more than 200 of our brave men being killed or wounded. I, too, was wounded at that instant, but not seriously enough to prevent me from remaining at my post. Being henceforth unable to undertake anything further against the *Victory*, I ordered the remainder of the men to man the guns again and fire at the *Temeraire* with those of the starboard guns that had not been put out of action by that ship's broadside. We were so depleted in numbers and had lost the use of so many guns that the *Temeraire* had the advantage of us in the gun duel. A short time later, a third ship, a two-decker, the exact strength of which I do not know, took up her position astern of the *Redoutable* and began to fire her guns at us from within pistol range. In less than half an hour, our ship was so riddled with cannon balls that she was reduced to a pile of wreckage ; the mainmast had fallen overboard on to the British *Temeraire* ; the two topmasts of the latter ship had fallen on board the *Redoutable* ; the stern was completely stove in ; the main piece of the rudder, the tiller, the two sweeps of the tiller, the stern post, the stern frame and transom, the arch of the counter were shot to pieces ; the decks were perforated by the cannon ball of the heavy guns of the *Victory* and the *Temeraire* ; all our guns were broken or knocked off their carriages by gunfire or by being fouled by the two enemy ships ; one 18 pounder gun of the second deck and one 36 pounder carronade of the forecastle had exploded, killing and wounding a considerable number of men ; the two sides of the ship, all the port-lids and beams were in splinters ; four of our six pumps were broken, as were also all our ladders, so that it had become extremely difficult to get from the lower decks to the upper deck ; our decks were covered in dead buried under débris and fragments of various parts of the ship ; a large proportion of our wounded were killed in the orlop-deck ; of 643 men, we had 522 out of action, of whom 300 were killed and 222 wounded, among them almost all the officers. Of the 121 men left, the majority were employed in handling gunpowder in the orlop-deck or in the hold, so that the gundeck and upper deck were utterly deserted, and we were, as a result, no longer able to offer any resistance. Those who have not seen the *Redoutable* in that state will never be able to form an idea of the pitiful condition she

[*Continued opposite.*

[The inscription from the French print.] *Le Vaisseau de S.M. I. & R. le* Redoutable, *de 74 canons Commandé par le Capitaine de Vaisseau Lucas, Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, coulant à fond à la remorque du Vaisseau anglais le* Swiftsure *à la suite d'un combat soutenu au canon et à l'Abordage contre les Vaisseaux anglais le* Victory, *de 120 canons, monté par l'Amiral Nelson, le Téméraire, de 110 canons, et le* Tonnant, *de 80 canons.*

Reproductions by courtesy of the

THE BRITISH VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR IN CONTEMPORARY FRENCH PRINTS: *REDOUTABLE*, FROM

le Vaisseau de S.M. I. & R. le Redoutable de 74 Canons, Commandé par le Capitaine de Vaisseau Lucas, Officier de la Légion d'Honneur
Combattant à l'abordage les deux Vaisseaux anglais à trois ponts le Victory de 120 Canons monté par l'Amiral Nelson, et le Témeraire de 110 Canons, tandis
qu'il était canonné en poupe par un Troisième Vaisseau anglais le Tonnant de 80 Canons.

His Imperial and Royal Majesty's ship *Redoutable*, 74 guns, commanded by Captain Lucas, Officer of the Legion of Honour, boarding the two English three-deckers, the *Victory*, 120 guns, flagship of Admiral Nelson, and the *Temeraire*, 110 guns, while she was being bombarded from astern by the *Tonnant*, 80 guns.
[A free translation of the Inscription on the French print.]

[A free translation from the inscription on the French print.] His Imperial and Royal Majesty's ship *Redoutable*, 74 guns, commanded by Captain Lucas, Officer of the Legion of Honour, being towed by the English ship *Swiftsure* after having been engaged in combat by gunfire and boarding with the English ships *Victory*, 120 guns, flagship of Admiral Nelson, the *Temeraire*, 110 guns, and the *Tonnant*, 80 guns.

Musée de la Marine, Paris.

WHICH WAS FIRED THE SHOT THAT KILLED NELSON, IN COMBAT WITH *VICTORY* AND *TEMERAIRE*.

Continued.]

was in. I can think of nothing on board that had not been cut by cannon ball. In the midst of all this ghastly havoc, the brave men who had not yet succumbed, and those with whom the orlop-deck was covered, were still shouting "Long live the Emperor! They have not taken us yet! Is the Captain still with us?" While in this state, a fire started near the rudder; fortunately it did not spread and we were able to extinguish it.

The *Victory* was no longer fighting us and was concerned solely with disentangling herself from the *Redoutable*; but we were being riddled by the crossed fire of the *Temeraire*, of which we were still foul, and that of the ship which had brought us under fire astern. Being unable to return their fire and seeing none of our ships, which were far distant to leeward, in a position to come to our aid, I was only waiting to surrender for the moment when the leaks our ship had sprung would be large enough to assure her going down without delay. The moment this information was brought me and I gave the order to surrender, our colours came down of their own accord as the mizzen mast itself crashed down. The ship which had been raking us from astern then ceased firing at us, but the *Temeraire* still continued her fire for some time and desisted only when she was forced to fight a fire that was rapidly spreading in her. It was then 2.30 in the afternoon. At that same moment, the *Fougueux*, which had been engaged with several ships and had been forced to surrender, drifted into the *Temeraire*, with which she remained entangled. Toward 3 o'clock, the *Victory* freed herself from the *Redoutable*, but she was in so ruinous a condition that she was out of action. At 7 o'clock that evening, the *Redoutable* freed herself from the *Temeraire*, which was still foul of the *Fougueux*; we were not manned as a prize; all that was done was that a British officer and some twenty marines or sailors were put on board. The British *Swiftsure* came to take us in tow; the pumps were used all night without it being possible to gain on the water. The next day, the Captain of the *Swiftsure* sent an armed boat to fetch me; together with Lieutenant Dupatel, my second-in-command, and Lieutenant Ducret, I was taken on board the British ship. At noon, the *Redoutable* lost her foremast, the only one which she had left. At 5 p.m. that evening, the water was still gaining on the pumps, and the captain of the prize asked for help; all the boats of the *Swiftsure* were put out to save the crew, and as there was a fresh gale and a heavy sea running, it was extremely difficult to get the wounded across. These wretched men, seeing their ship about to founder, had nearly all dragged themselves to the quarterdeck. It proved possible to save some of them, but at 7 p.m., the stern of the *Redoutable* having given way, she sank with the major part of those unfortunate men whose courage had made them worthy of a better fate.

Signed: LUCAS.

This vivid account of the action fought by the *Redoutable* is taken from the "*Journal de la campagne du Vau 'L'Algésirace,' commandé par le Capitaine de Vau Brouard et monté par le Contre-Amiral Magon à l'usage du Lieutenant de Vau Philibert, son Adjutant.*" This journal, containing a description of the events leading to the Battle of Trafalgar, and the action itself has, as far as can be ascertained, never before been published.

"Oh? What's that? It's not mine, I didn't bring anything . . ."

"GIVE ME A RING"

By ANTHONY GILBERT, Author of "Is She Dead Too?"; "Snake in the Grass"; "Miss Pinnager Disappears"; "Something Nasty in the Woodshed," etc., etc.

Illustrated by GORDON NICOLL, R.I.

IT was Christmas Eve and nearly five of the clock, but an afternoon less like the traditional ideas of the season would be hard to imagine. True, a little snow had fallen in the early hours, but this was rapidly churned into slush by the relentless London traffic and about mid-day a haze of fog began to spread over the city. As the afternoon deepened the fog thickened, throwing a yellowish curtain over buildings and the traffic that even now streamed remorselessly through the darkening streets. Not that Londoners allowed that to deter them from providing themselves with everything they wanted or could lay hands on for a merry day to-morrow. It was the best Christmas ever, according to the shops. Peace was just round the corner and prosperity was knocking on the door. Scarcity was receding, and even at this hour the stalls in the market, east of the Mansion House, were doing a roaring trade. Men, their work done until after the holiday, joined their wives, haggling for turkeys and geese at lower figures than they 'd have fetched a few hours earlier; children lugged fish-baskets full of oranges and apples and nuts; the last shining boxes of crackers, the dates, the tins of sweets, even the flowers found ready customers. All the Christmas trees had been sold already, but branches of fir and sprays of holly and mistletoe, were being offered from the crowded pavements. The nylon-sellers had moved east from Oxford Street and set up their portmanteaux of wares on the corner; coloured streamers in the hands of children became unfolded and shone out orange and blue and green against the darkening skies.

Gillian Hinde, a student nurse, as pretty as any fairy-tale princess, with her fair, smooth hair tied up in a blue scarf and her eyes shining, stood back to watch the happy, surging crowds. For her, too, the Day had arrived. Most of her friends who wouldn't be on duty over Christmas had gone home already; the railway stations—record crowds, declared the radio buoyantly—and the coach stations had been packed all day; north, east, south and west they had departed. But Gillian envied none of them. No one, she felt, could anticipate a more joyous festival than she. Oh, it was beautiful to be twenty-three and in love, and know that next spring you 'd be Mrs. Richard Fyfe. Even now the miracle seemed too good to be true. So many girls in the world, pretty, ardent girls, all eager for love, and out of them all, Richard's choice had fallen upon her. She could still hardly believe it. Richard, who was bound to be a success, whose hopes soared as high as clouds in summer; Richard, the young doctor of whom everyone prophesied great things, and who wanted to marry her out of all the women in the world.

She had come off duty immediately after lunch and sped back to her little flat—one room really, with a kitchen and a bathroom big enough for a sparrow, Richard teased her, but it was all the home she knew since her father died three years before—sped back to put the final touches to the little shining tree, add the last cards to the red ribbon strings she 'd hung on the walls, put up the few sprigs of holly (no mistletoe, no house that needs mistletoe will have any use for it, Richard said), and set the table for the first Christmas dinner she would ever share alone with Richard, who was her dear love and, in a few months, would be her husband. The duck was prepared, the vegetables ready, the fruit set out in the charming rough-cast bowls she had brought back from Spain this summer; the coffee beans were waiting to be ground in the little mill Richard had given her for her last birthday, there were drinks in the ice-box and a dozen silly bits of nonsense tied up in different coloured papers for Richard's pleasure. She had come east, since the big stores had closed their gates and released their employees at mid-day, to look for the cheeses, the cumqhats, the twists of rye bread they both liked. Someone had told her that in this market there was a stall where you could buy a special kind of sweetmeat Richard adored, and once there she 'd lingered, delighting in the scene, the colour, the sounds, the mixture of races and tongues that declared the coming of joy into a thousand homes.

The change took place with practically no warning at all. Between half-past five and six o'clock the whole city changed. The fog that had been no more than a gauze curtain, shot with gold lights from the stalls and the shop-fronts and the street lamps, became a curtain of darkness. People were so much astounded they stopped dead, where they stood, as confounded as if they had stepped all in a moment from one world to another. Mothers turned, calling their children. Stall-holders stood aghast, then began to put together anything that was left. Gillian, who had just turned out of the market, her basket on her arm, her purse in her pocket, intending to make for the high road and catch one of the red buses that would bring her close to her own home, stood as still as the rest, bewildered, though not panicking yet, because this was London, where she had lived for five years and where it was impossible to imagine you could ever be lost.

"If ever you 're not sure of your way in London," her father had said when she left the country rectory five years ago to start her training at St. Ninian's, "look for a red bus. Where there 's a bus in London there 's life, and where there 's life there 's hope." She remembered his kind, infinitely tolerant face, his gentle voice, and calmed her fears.

" I came round a corner when I left the market," she reminded herself. " If I go along this street and turn right I 'm bound to get back to the high road."

But somehow her calculations must have gone astray, for when she turned the next corner she found herself in another narrow lane, with no lights anywhere. It was useless to try to discover the name of the road; darkness blotted out every landmark, but since all roads lead somewhere, she forged ahead. She had been walking for some minutes before she had to confess to herself that she was as lost as if she 'd walked headlong into the City of Dreadful Night. What was strangest of all was the silence; the voices of children that had pealed all round her a few minutes before were dumb; she could hear no footsteps, no sound of wheels. On either side of her blank walls reared up into the dark. Surely, if there were houses here, some golden gleams should be perceptible between the hastily-drawn curtains, the sound of a radio set should come to her attentive ears. But though she compelled herself to stand still and listen intently, she heard nothing, not even the whine of a dog or the sound of a passing car. Of course, there was a rational explanation. Clearly, she had turned away from the residential quarter into one of those roads that were areas of factories, all closed now for the Christmas holiday. Calming her fears, she attempted to retrace her steps. The market couldn't have shut down in these few minutes; soon she would hear wheels rattling over cobble-stones, people calling to each other, all the normal sounds of busy London life. But, though she refused to yield to panic, every step she took seemed to take her further into an uninhabited world.

The sight of a window where a light was still burning, at the end of a ribbon of darkness, gave her heart a sudden lift. Where there were lights there must be people, and where there was even one living soul she would get directions to put her on her homeward road. Walking close against the wall, for the pavements here were narrow and she had no wish to trip over the kerb, she made her way to that welcome golden pane. Rather surprisingly, she found the light came from one of those odd establishments known as marine stores, where every kind of junk was on sale, ropes and lanterns and bits of brass, all the flotsam and jetsam of a sea-going community. She stood staring in at the window, wondering what hope an optimistic dealer had of effecting a sale so late and on such a night. And then she saw it—in the very middle of the window, as if someone had set it there for a bait, something so unexpected, and, to her eyes, so beautiful, that she remained transfixed for a moment, while the anxious coffee-coloured little man on the other side of the glass watched her as eagerly and secretively as an animal peering from its hiding-place.

The object in question was a ring, a quite ordinary setting containing a blue stone that glowed and sparkled as if it had gathered up all the light the fog had sucked out of the streets and flung it back with an unbelievable radiance. She had no notion what precisely it was, no stone to which she could put a name, neither sapphire nor opal nor turquoise—one of those mysterious stones whose names made a chain of beauty in that chapter she had heard her father read in the church at home, beryl, jacinth and chrysophrase—a semi-precious stone, of no particular value, probably, brought back by some sailor who had turned it in for whatever it would fetch in money or goods. In her bag were five pound notes sent by her Aunt Henrietta in the north. Buy yourself a luxury, she had written, but since they had arrived Gillian had seen nothing that would justify the extravagance of so much money for a single present. But once she 'd set eyes on the ring she knew there was nothing else in London she wanted so much.

She had a new dress for to-night, a dress of turquoise-blue wool bought for the occasion, just the colour to bring out the blue tints in her eyes that were neither blue nor grey but a mixture of the two. She had scarcely any jewellery. Richard hadn't given her a ring yet; he wouldn't give her anything second-rate and she wouldn't allow him to spend money he couldn't afford on the sort of ring he would think good enough for her.

" Dear Aunt Henrietta," murmured Gillian to herself, putting out her hand with a sudden pang of apprehension, in case, after all, the light was a will-o'-the-wisp and the shop was already shut. But she needn't have feared. The man behind the counter wouldn't dare put up the shutters, draw down the blind and turn the key until the one he 'd been told to expect had put in an appearance.

And when he saw Gillian he supposed that this was the one.

He called himself Mr. Benn now, though that hadn't been his name in far-away Morocco, where he had been born, and that seemed part of another world, when he thought of it, which wasn't often. They 'd been poor enough then, all of them living in a room not much better than a cave, opening off a narrow alley, with the donkeys going up and down, led by men in native dress, crying as they went, to warn the unwary to get out of the path. He 'd been intended to follow in his father's footsteps, become a player in one of the Moorish cafés, making the music come from a stretched skin, not with a stick as in the West, but with the fingers stiffened or slack to get the appropriate sound. All day long he had sat there cross-legged, while the natives and the foreign soldiers and sometimes the tourists passed through to listen to the music and sip the little glasses of sweetened mint tea. Then, when he was sixteen, everything had changed. There had been a brawl in the café, a man had been killed, and early the next day he had been warned that he was in danger. He hadn't waited, he supposed he had never been particularly brave, but had gone like a breath of dust, and had never returned. At first he used to wonder about his family, the three sisters at the carpet-weaving school, the brothers who were herdsmen and the one who was a teacher—but he forgot them all at last. The pity was that he had lost the East and had never become truly merged with the West. He worked his way down to the port and eventually he reached Europe, a drifter, a man without a purpose. Now he was a tool, a not very efficient tool at that, in a nasty business, without hopes or prospects, only knowing he 'd be lucky if he died in his bed. So many of them didn't—Eric, who had been taken out of the dock only a week or so before, and the one they called Big Tom, who had contrived to be in the way of a lorry at a place and time where you wouldn't have expected any lorry to be. He might be the next, or the fourth or the tenth, there was no knowing. He only knew that the boss never forgave mistakes—couldn't afford to, that was about the truth of it.

He had been waiting a long time for someone to push open the door. Ever since he put the ring in the window he had been anticipating this moment. It didn't surprise him that he failed to recognise the girl—why should he? He had never seen her before. But he hadn't somehow expected anyone who looked like this. There were women in the drug-running world, of course, but generally there was something—scarred—about them. This girl looked as young as the morning. He even thought it was just coincidence, that she had lost her way and was coming in to ask how to find it. But as soon as she spoke he knew it was all right, because she said what he had been told she would.

" That ring in your window—the one with the blue stone. How much is it? "

He didn't make any move to show it to her. " What can you offer me for it? "

Make sure you don't mention a figure, he had been warned. And she said, " I 've only got five pounds. Would that be enough? " She started to open her bag, with a childlike enthusiasm. He turned then and stooped into the window, conscious of a strange disappointment. Not that it was any concern of his, of course. It was just chance—or good judgment on the boss's part more likely—that she should have that clear, shining look. And why should he care? Innocence was a word he 'd forgotten long ago.

The ring looked as beautiful in your hand as it had done in the window, Gillian thought. She slipped it on her finger, turning it this way and that to catch the light from the meagre bulb above the counter. It seemed impossible that anyone should be lost in a fog so long as *that* existed. It would light you through the darkness of the grave. She came back from her reverie with a blush for her own extravagance.

" Is five pounds right? " she asked, scarcely able to keep the marvel out of her voice.

" That 's right." His manner seemed strange—weary, as though it made no difference to him whether he made a sale or not; and yet she was convinced it wasn't because he loved the ring so much himself he didn't want to part with it.

" It 's Christmas Eve," she reflected compassionately. " He 's tired."

And no doubt he had no such glittering prospect to look forward to as awaited her on her return.

" It 's like blue fire, isn't it? " She smiled. But he didn't reply. What was there to say? It was a business transaction, like the kiss of Judas in the Christian story that meant nothing to him. Even his own faith didn't matter any more. He knew he 'd never again hear the muezzin ring out from the balcony of a mosque or hear the guns sound for Ramadan.

He picked up the money she 'd laid on the counter and put it in the till. She was looking about her with frank interest, but he thought it was all assumed, so that she shouldn't see him take the little packet from under the counter and lay it before her. When she looked back and espied it there she contrived a gesture of quite realistic surprise.

" Oh? What 's that? It 's not mine, I didn't bring anything . . ."

" No." He couldn't flog any enthusiasm into his voice.

She leaned nearer. " Mr. Smith, 19, Merriton Square. Oh, is it something to be posted? "

Only it wasn't stamped, and it would be too late for Christmas, anyway.

The little brown man behind the counter began to cough; he coughed as though he couldn't help it, as though his whole life was slipping away from him in those agonised sounds.

" Oh, dear," said Gillian. " You do sound bad. Have you got to take this round to-night? What a shame! "

He said, smoothing his thin brown hands over his face as though to wipe away the last trace of the cough, " It 's got to be delivered to-night."

He watched her anxiously. It couldn't be that he was wrong about her after all. A police constable, materialising out of the fog, came to stand by the window. Mr. Benn felt himself turning cold.

At last Gillian looked up. " I could take it for you, if you like," she said. " Merriton Square isn't very far out of my way, and—I 'm sure you shouldn't go out again to-night."

The boss trained them well, he thought; if that policeman was watching he 'd swear she didn't know a thing.

" I know how it is with a present," she went on. " Even if you know it 's coming, it never seems quite the same thing if you don't get it on the day."

He felt the germ of unease stir within him. Acting was all very well, but surely this was overdoing it. But before he could speak again she had opened her bag and slipped the packet in and turned to smile at him. The policeman, who had only been staring in the window, perhaps, because it was the one lighted place in the area, strolled on. His heart settled down. Of course it was all right.

" Is there any message? " she enquired, turning to go.

He shook his head, smiling faintly for the first time. " No. It 's expected. They rang up. That 's when I promised. . . ." He could do a little acting, too, when he had to.

He moved to indicate that there was nothing more to be said. He told her how to find the main road and watched her go. Now he wanted nothing but to put up the shutters, close the shop and find the only peace left to him, oblivion at the point of a needle. She saw the move and turned to the door.

" You needn't worry," she said. " It 'll be all right." And as she went out she threw a " Happy Christmas " over her shoulder. That shook him, made him wonder if, after all. . . . But it was too late now.

she 'd gone. And anyway, what on earth was she doing here at this hour, a girl like that, if she wasn't part of the scheme ? He came round, walking a little lame, and began to put up the shutters.

Gillian came out of the shop and began to make her careful way towards the main road, following Mr. Benn's instructions. As she crossed the street she looked up ; the fog had cleared sufficiently for her to be able to make out his name painted above the door. She felt the blue stone under her dark glove and confidence began to return. It was quite a little adventure to tell Richard, and remembering him, she glanced at the watch on her wrist. To her horror she found it was twenty minutes to seven—and Richard was expected at seven o'clock. It was unthinkable that he should arrive and find the flat in darkness, an omen even for the future. She drove the thought away and hurried forward. Perhaps, now it had lightened a little, some of the omnibuses would be running. But, of course, they had stopped some time ago. Sheer suicide and murder to keep them on the roads, drivers and conductors had agreed. The long main street was full of shadows but not much else. All sane people would be under cover by now. She passed a few lighted windows, all closed and curtained, though here and there a wireless sang or shouted through the dusk.

Love came down at Christmas, she heard, and her heart lifted again. She began to hurry. Perhaps there was an Underground station not far off. But she saw no welcoming blue lighted sign and was beginning to despair, when a whisper of wheels reached her ears and, turning, she saw a solitary taxi come chugging up behind her, its flag covered. She stood on the kerb, holding up her hand and shouting, " Gordon Street," in the hope that it might be going that way. The cab stopped and the driver peered out.

" I 'm going to Ship Street," he said, " if that 's any good."

She jumped in gratefully. She knew Ship Street, it wasn't more than five minutes away from her home. Oh, what good fortune that she should have found this cab. She might just catch Richard after all. All her thoughts were for him and of him ; the encounter with Mr. Benn might never have taken place ; in her heart she urged the taxi to greater speed, and when it set her down she hurried towards Gordon Street as fast as feet would take her. She didn't give the little packet a thought—not then. If she had, the whole story might have been different for them all.

The telephone was shrilling away as she came up the stairs, and as she thrust her key into the door she thought, " Richard ! Something 's happened. He can't come to-night. He 's ill—changed his mind—dead." Even as she thought this she knew it was nonsense, for how could love die in an hour, yet her heart beat wildly as she flung down her bag and gloves, pulled off the blue mackintosh and wrenched the receiver from its rest.

It was Richard, but he sounded exasperated rather than loving.

" At last ! " he exclaimed. " This is the third time I 've rung. Where on earth have you been ? "

" Darling, I was out—shopping."

" At this hour ? "

" There were just a few little things—and then the fog came on and I lost my way."

" That 's what I thought. Know why I 'm going to be late this evening ? " He disregarded her protesting wail. " Because some other bright boy thought he 'd do a bit of shopping and lost his way in the fog and walked slap into a bus."

" Oh, darling ! On Christmas Eve ? What wicked luck ! Is he . . . ? "

" He 'll do," was Richard's grim rejoinder. " Don't expect me to feel sorry for the chap. He 's going to do me out of at least half an hour of your company. Oh, yes, he 'll be all right, but if anyone was looking to him to lend a hand with the washing-up this Christmas they 're going to be disappointed. Now, don't take it into your head, because you 've got a little time on your hands, to go out and buy a few more things we don't need."

" Darling, I couldn't. The shops are all shut. Yes, I promise. Oh, darling, I do love you so. I don't want you to neglect your poor casualty, but don't be longer than you can help. I 've got so much to tell you. Richard, I 've bought a ring."

" You 've bought what ? "

" With Aunt Henrietta's five pounds. With a lovely blue stone. From a queer old man called Benn in the East End, near the market. It was quite an adventure. I 'll tell you. . . ." She stopped suddenly.

" I can't wait," came Richard's dry voice over the line. " Take care of yourself, my darling. Darling, I love you, too."

Gillian hung up the receiver, and looked round the pretty, welcoming room. She switched on the electric fire and its golden glow was reflected in the little coloured balls shining on the tree and the glasses on the table. She had set a little home-made crib along the top of the bookcase and a string of little silver bells rippled into music as the wind touched them. But she wasn't thinking of any of these things. She was remembering the little parcel in her handbag, the parcel she had promised old Mr. Benn faithfully she 'd deliver before night.

She looked once more at her watch. Quite apart from her promise to Richard, she couldn't go out again. There wasn't time. He mustn't come and find the door closed. And yet—that unknown Christmas present that she 'd accepted as her responsibility lay heavy on her tender heart. She thought desperately. Perhaps she and Richard could deliver it together this evening after dinner. But she knew Richard wouldn't feel much enthusiasm about that. He had probably had a hard day—people seemed to choose the eve of public holidays to get themselves knocked out—and the weather would tempt no one but a man who expected to profit by the cold and the dark. For some reason a rhyme began to jingle through her mind.

> Another little job for the undertaker,
> Put through a call to the tombstone-maker . . .

Suddenly she had a better idea. She would deliver the parcel herself next morning, quite early, on her way back from church. It wasn't likely anyone not a child would start opening presents before then. So—her spirits rose like milk bubbling up in a saucepan—she had only to let Mr. Smith know she 'd be coming, and all would be well.

There were scores of Smiths in the telephone directory, but she couldn't find one who lived at 19, Merriton Square. She supposed dismally it must be someone spending Christmas in London. She dialled the operator and explained her difficulty.

" The trouble is I don't know the name of the tenant."

" Perhaps the house isn't on the 'phone," suggested the operator, cheerfully.

" Mr. Smith rang up from somewhere trying to trace the parcel," Gillian recalled. " Isn't there any way . . . ? "

" There might be—seeing it 's Christmas. Hold on."

She held on for what seemed a very long time. Then the operator's voice said : " It 's the Angel. Know it ? "

She shook her head before she realised she couldn't be seen. " No. What is it ? A pub ? "

" More of a road-house," said the voice, a little doubtfully. " Big place on the corner, with a restaurant. Anyway, I 'll give you the number."

She scribbled it down on a pad beside the telephone.

" Thank you. You 've been very kind. I 'm most grateful."

" Don't give it a thought." He rang off, and Gillian depressed the receiver and dialled again.

" Is that Mr. Smith ? " Whoever it was must have been sitting beside the telephone.

" Who 's that ? "

" You won't know my name, but I have a parcel for you—from Mr. Benn. You know who I mean ? I gathered you 'd left it there this afternoon and he promised to return it."

" Fair enough," murmured Mr. Smith. " Where are you 'phoning from ? "

" I 'm at home."

The voice deepened a little. " What 's up ? You haven't lost it ? "

" Oh, no, but the truth is I forgot all about leaving it—I was very late, you see, had an appointment myself . . ."

" And you 've still got it ? Is that it ? " The voice sounded like Nurse Williams in one of her moods and for a moment she felt anger stir in her. Still, this was the season of peace and goodwill, so she smoothed out her voice and said, " I was going to suggest bringing it round in the morning—oh, quite early, before nine. Would that do ? If it 's a present, I mean ? "

" But it isn't a present," exclaimed the voice, sounding dismayed. " It 's very urgent. Didn't the old man explain ? It 's a prescription for my wife ; she must have it this evening. Benn rang up to say it was on the way. I couldn't send for it, because I can't leave her—is there no way you can get it here to-night ? "

Gillian felt exasperation rise again in her heart. A man hadn't any right to mislay anything so important and then sound outraged because someone else had forgotten too. But she was a nurse and she knew what might happen if a patient didn't get the right treatment at the right time, so she said : " In that case, of course, I must bring it round."

She rang off. She had been horribly disappointed when Richard had said he would be late, even half-an-hour 's an age when you are in love, but perhaps it was a good thing, after all. Merriton Square wasn't very far and if she ran all the way there and all the way back she might be home before Richard arrived. Still, it wasn't safe to count on that. Taking up the pencil again she turned over the slip of paper and scribbled :

> Darling, don't be angry, I 've had to go out, a matter of life and death. I hope I 'll be back before you read this, but anyway I won't be long. Darling, I love you.

She 'd pin the note on the door where he couldn't miss it, and leave the flat door open just a crack. The landlord wouldn't like it, but then he need never know, and burglars wouldn't be looking for anything worth their trouble in a house like this. On an impulse, she snatched up the pencil once more and added : " I have gone to the Angel, Merriton Square." She didn't know what impulse made her add that, or what a difference it was going to make to them both.

After Gillian had left the shop Mr. Benn lost no time in putting up the shutters and locking the door. To his surprise, he found he couldn't forget the girl in the blue mackintosh, the girl who was such a good actress that he 'd been tempted to think her coming was one of those coincidences which occur in life so much more often than writers of fiction dare ask their readers to believe. He went into a room behind the shop and began making his own preparations for the rest of the evening. When that was done he saw that it was almost seven o'clock, and on an impulse he turned on the news. World affairs didn't interest him, but there might be something. . . . He sat patiently by the little radio-set while a cheerful, competent voice told about record crowds leaving the main London stations and London's sudden black-out, and prophesied better weather for the morning. At the end came the bit he had been waiting for.

> Police are continuing their enquiries into the death of the man whose body was found in the dock on Tuesday last. He has been identified as a labourer named Eric Boxer. It is now thought that death was due to collision with a motor vehicle, the body being deposited in the water after this had occurred. Any driver or passer-by who may have witnessed an accident or any suspicious circumstance . . .

He put out his hand and turned off the radio. So they were on the trail, and the police were like their own dogs, they never gave up. When he had heard he had felt a shudder of apprehension—what Arthur Crook

would have called a hunch. The boss had taken the one risk too many. He took off his coat and put on a dressing-gown, eased his feet into slippers, filled the needle. . . . And then he heard it, the knocking at the front door, a steady, quiet rapping of knuckles on glass. He felt himself freeze up. Steady, he thought, it 's some child—or p'raps he 'd left the light burning in the shop and some officious policeman making his rounds wanted to be sure that all was well. The police were on their toes these days. Eric Boxer had been killed not 500 yards away. No one had told Mr. Benn just what had happened, but though he hadn't had much schooling—just a native school, where you sat in a long row and learned the Koran and nothing else—he could add two and two as well as most people. Not that he could afford compassion for Boxer, any more than he could afford it for the girl. If you have any pity to spare, keep it for yourself—that was one of the lessons life had taught him.

The knocking became more insistent. Then the bell started to peal. He knew then he had to go out. He put the needle down and went reluctantly into the shop.

He recognised the man in the doorway. Pug Mayhew, they called him; he was well in with the boss, much better in than poor Mr. Benn would ever be. His big face was scowling.

" What 's the idea of the fancy dress ? " he demanded, nodding towards the dressing-gown. " More than that, what 's the game ? Well, come on, out with it." He came into the shop, slamming the door behind him, and caught Mr. Benn by the faded silken lapels. " Sold us up the river, have you ? What did they give you ? Enough to pay for a fine funeral, I hope. The boss don't pay funeral expenses—in his opinion rats don't deserve as much as a shroud."

Mr. Benn tried to struggle free. " I don't understand you."

" No ? How about that ring, then ? "

Mr. Benn recovered some of his lost breath. " It 's all right; she came half-an-hour ago. The stuff will be delivered by this time."

Pug Mayhew pushed forward, thrusting Mr. Benn back. He closed the door of the shop behind him.

" What 's that you 're saying ? Who 's been ? "

" The girl. The girl for the ring."

But he had begun to tremble.

Pug nodded casually, as if it didn't really matter much, after all. He let his eyes roam round the walls, examine the junk that filled the room, the bits of brass, the old stone Buddha, the ropes and the lanterns—the whole stock wouldn't fetch £50 at an auction.

" That 's very interesting," he said at last, when he 'd completed his leisurely survey. " About the girl, I mean. The boss 'll want to know a bit more about her."

Mr. Benn was staring at him, the fear undisguised in the brown eyes.

" She came in and asked for the ring, just as I was told she would; she offered five pounds. Five pounds was right, wasn't it ? How was I to know ? Do you mean that wasn't the right one ? "

" I mean the rozzers have laid a trap and you 've walked right into it. You old fool ! " His voice changed, became savage and menacing. " Well, you 've signed your death-warrant, I suppose you realise that. Didn't you know they were after us, ever since they took Eric out of the water ? That 's why the boss had to be so careful, couldn't send anyone who might be recognised. They picked up the chap who ought to have come; picked him up this morning on a charge of car-stealing; that 's why I 'm here."

" I wasn't to blame," stammered Mr. Benn. " She said the right things, didn't she ? Anyway, she took the stuff, she 'll deliver it. She didn't dream—I swear . . ." But his voice faltered away into an agonised silence.

A good actress, he 'd thought; the boss knows how to pick 'em. But it wasn't the boss, it was the authorities; and he remembered the police constable stopping by the window. Wanting to make sure everything was going off all right, that she got the packet. Of course, Smith wouldn't have it; it would be at the station. He felt a surge of impotent rage that a girl who looked so innocent could have cheated him like that. But desperately, in the face of Pug Mayhew's threats, he stuck to his assertion.

" If she wasn't the one, she wasn't in with *them*. She said she 'd leave the parcel, and she meant it."

" Did she ? You know, Benn, I don't think the boss is going to be pleased when he hears you 've given away the address of the headquarters. Has Smith telephoned to say it 's O.K. ? "

" No. No, not yet. But—why should he ? He . . ."

Pug Mayhew pushed the little man out of the way as if he 'd been an old sack or a broken chair that 's only fit for the rubbish-heap, and indeed the analogy was a pretty accurate one. Like his boss, that ruthless criminal who was making his pile out of the weaknesses and the corruption of his fellow-creatures, Pug had no use for people when they ceased to be profitable. He strode into the back room and snatched up the telephone. Mr. Benn watched him from the doorway. He couldn't make a bolt for it, not in a dressing-gown and slippers, and it wouldn't have helped him, anyway. He was pretty sure in that moment he wasn't going to be one of those fortunate enough to die in his own bed.

Pug was talking to Mr. Smith. " How long ago ? " he repeated, and looked across to Mr. Benn. " How long ago did this girl leave ? "

" About half-an-hour—but there 's a fog . . ."

" Not now, not bad enough for you to lose your way. And don't tell me there are no buses running, because I know it. You could walk to Merriton Square in half the time, supposing you wanted to get there, that is." He hung up the telephone receiver.

" Funny thing," he remarked, and now his tone was almost conversational. " Your lady friend never reached the Angel. And do you know why ? Because she never meant to go there. She laid a neat little trap and you walked into it, like a bloody mouse. And you know what happens to mice when they go into traps ? Or haven't you even the guts to put them down ? Well, I 'll tell you. They get their bloody little necks broken. And you 're nothing but a mouse, are you, Benn ? "

The little brown man shrank back. Keep away from me; his lips formed the words, but they remained inaudible. He knew Mayhew was speaking the truth, that to him this outcast from a foreign country, this landless man, was of no more account than a rat or a mouse on which he 'd put his great boot without a second thought.

Pug Mayhew had taken up the telephone again, called another number. When he had finished that conversation he took a knife from his pocket and deliberately cut the wires.

" You won't be needing it any more to-night," he explained. " We 're going for a little walk together, you and me. Because, you see, that stuff never reached our friend at the Angel, and any minute now you may get another visitor, an official one this time, and the boss doesn't want to give you the chance to squeal. He don't like squealers, Benn." With a sudden gesture he drew his hand across his throat, sawing at it, and uttered the loud, terrified squeal of a dying pig. " So we think, him and me, it 'ud be a good thing if you weren't here when they come."

He made a last desperate fight for his life, though why, he could hardly have told you, since it was worth so little, even to him.

" That girl was honest," he said. " She 'll deliver the goods to the Angel. She must have lost her way."

Pug Mayhew laughed. " Well, it doesn't matter really either road. She 'll be taken care of. Smith's got his orders. She 's like you, Benn—expendable."

He saw the hypodermic lying on the table, picked it up and tossed it contemptuously into the grate. " O.K. O.K. You won't be wanting that any more, and we oughtn't to put temptation in the way of the innocent." He let out a yelp of laughter. " That 'ud make the Commissioner howl, wouldn't it ? An innocent rozzer. Come on. There 's a way out by the back, isn't there ? "

Mr. Benn shivered. The back way led, eventually, to the river, the same water wherein Eric had been found, and where soon he, too. . . . He thrust the thought away, looking longingly at the shattered syringe. That might have been *his* way, if he 'd had the courage to take it—might have taken it long ago for all the value his life had had all these years.

" Coming ? " suggested Mayhew. " Nothing to wait for now." And, hypnotised, helpless, he crossed the floor, passed into the passage, and their feet could be heard ringing on the stone corridor.

Back in the Angel Mr. Smith was dialling Benn's shop, but he got nothing but an angry hiss for his pains. When at last he got hold of the operator he was told the number was out of order.

" It wasn't out of order ten minutes ago," he insisted.

" P'raps someone 's cut the line," grinned the operator. " Christmas Eve's the time for good, clean fun." He rang off, laughing. Arthur Crook, that black sheep among lawyers, might have reminded him that many a true word is spoken in jest.

Smith sat thoughtful for a moment. He 'd wanted to tell Pug that the girl had just telephoned and the stuff was on its way, in spite of the bloomer old man Benn had made. For Smith knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that someone had blundered. This girl hadn't the smallest idea that she was passing dynamite. After a bit, and with some trepidation, he rang another number, one that didn't appear in the book, and made his report. When he heard what the boss had to say he rang off again and became very busy indeed.

When Gillian came out into the street she found the fog was a pale greenish haze in place of the brown blanket it had been an hour before. All the same, there were no buses running.

She sent one beseeching glance up and down the road, but this time there was no cruising taxi, so she set off at a brisk pace in the direction of Merriton Square. From her window on the ground-floor of Gordon Street, old Miss Beachcroft watched her go, and wondered what it felt like to be young and pretty, and so obviously in love, and with so much to do you were in and out like a jack-in-the-box. She was an old woman now and she lived vicariously in the lives of others.

" Gone to meet that young man of hers, I suppose," sighed Miss Beachcroft. She was going to spend Christmas Day alone, as Mr. Benn had planned to do; for her, like a lot of other solitary people, Christmas was just another Sunday, without any newspapers.

Church bells were ringing as the girl hurried through the empty streets. It made her think of childhood, when they 'd all been at home together, they who were all scattered now; they used to decorate the church and polish the brass, and Mother had a big sit-down tea for all the helpers, and then they trooped into the church to listen to Daddy reading evensong, with that glow that he never lost right up to the end. When he announced the promise of salvation for mankind it was always with the same throb of incredulous anticipation in his voice. For him the Christmas story never became dulled or blunted; every year the miracle was renewed. . . .

Remembering the past, she reached the Angel before she realised it, had actually walked by the door before the significance of the lights and the traffic and the sound of the wireless came home to her. She turned back, then hesitated, paralysed by shyness. Girls she knew went in and out of bars as readily as they went in and out of shops, but she 'd never been like that. She looked about for a private bell, but couldn't see one. Two men were watching her with amused eyes.

" After you, girlie," said one of them, and with the colour rushing into her cheeks she preceded them into the bar.

A good many people were standing or sitting at the counter, exchanging badinage with the girl behind it. Others sat at small tables, with their glasses in front of them. After the foggy streets the interior presented a cheerful, gay picture. But Gillian's mind was filled with a gayer picture

still, the room waiting for Richard, decked as eager as a lover. She looked about her uncertainly, then approached the bar. The girl was too busy to take any notice of her at first, and a man she 'd never seen before offered her a drink.

" Christmas Eve," he said.

She smiled and moved away ; then, catching the barmaid's eye, she asked : " Do you know if Mr. Smith is here ? "

There was a sort of chuckle from the girl. " If he said he would be I dare say he is." She looked at the men nearest her, saying : " Any of you gentlemen called Smith ? "

One of them said in gallant tones, " I could be, if the little lady doesn't mind."

" It 's very important," gulped Gillian, " I telephoned . . ."

" If he 's stood you up, dear, don't you have anything more to do with him," said the girl (she must have been thirty, but we 're all girls nowadays). " It 's a shame. . . . Look, dear, you sit down and give him five minutes, and then if he doesn't come you go out and find yourself someone more worth the trouble."

" No need to go out," said the man who'd spoken before. He was in the happy stage of drinking, didn't mean her any harm, she had the wit to see that, but, all the same, it was fortunate Richard wasn't here. Richard had a high-flying temper, struck first and looked all round the situation afterwards. She went reluctantly towards a little table, and stared round at the coloured streamers and the balloons that puffed up and down on the smoky air. Anger began to overlay her nervousness. She 'd come out at great inconvenience because of a man's carelessness in leaving a parcel in a shop ; the least he could do was be waiting for her.

" The very least," she repeated, not aware that she spoke aloud.

" The least shall be first, is that it ? " asked a voice so close to her that she jumped. " Did I startle you ? Sorry. I believe you may have something for me."

She hadn't even seen the man approach. Somehow he wasn't a bit what she 'd anticipated—an anxious, not very young man worried over his wife. This one was good-looking in a brash sort of way, good teeth, smiling eyes. " I say, is that what you bought at the old man's ? " He looked down at the blue ring. He was wearing rather a showy ring of his own.

" Yes. It was lucky, in a way, that I went in, wasn't it ? "

" Nice." He put out a casual hand and touched it. Quickly she produced the little parcel and put it into his hands. " I mustn't stop, I 'm expecting someone."

" I 'm sure he 'll wait. You can't go without a drink."

" Oh, please." She half-rose. " I ought to be back before now."

" O.K. O.K. Matter of fact—where did you say you lived ? Oh—Gordon Street ? I 've got a friend here, got his car, going that way. He 'll give you a lift. Yes, of course it 'll be all right," as she started to protest. " Pleasure for him."

She subsided ; it would be pleasant not to have to walk back.

" What 'll it be ? A sherry ? I 'll get it."

She saw him move over to the counter, to return a minute later with two glasses in his hands.

" Happy days ! " He lifted his glass and drank. Gillian looked disturbed. This cheerful little chatterer didn't seem to fit in with her notion of a man troubled about his wife's illness. He was ready to hang about the bar and had no sign of anxiety about him. She drank the sherry quickly.

" What took a girl like you down to Benn's place this afternoon ? " asked her companion suddenly.

She was so much surprised that she answered the question at once.

" I was told there was a stall in the market where I could get something I specially wanted and couldn't find anywhere else."

" Then I hope you found it," he said heartily. " All the same, Benn 's not exactly in the market."

" The fog came on and I missed my way. I found his shop quite by accident, because there was a light in the window."

" That was lucky. Pity I wasn't there to show you the way home."

He must have recognised the flicker of distaste that shadowed her features, for he said in a coaxing way, " Just my fun. Christmas only comes once a year, you know. And you 're a sweet kid to have fagged out with this." He touched the pocket into which he 'd put the little parcel.

Embarrassed, she looked over his head and in the long strip of glass behind the bar she saw the swing-door open a few inches and a face peer in. It hung there for a moment, then caught Mr. Smith's eye and nodded slightly. He nodded back, and the face slid away again.

" I 've just had the wigwag that your chariot awaits," said Mr. Smith with sickening facetiousness, " so if you 're ready . . ."

She jumped up so quickly she almost spilled the sherry in his glass.

" I dare say there 's someone waiting for you," said Mr. Smith, putting an unnecessary hand on her arm to guide her to the door. A big, red-headed man, with eyebrows like another fellow's moustaches and wearing a suit whose shade would hardly have disgraced a fox, watched them go, with a frown. He hadn't any girls of his own, having never even got around to finding a wife (and what some woman 's been spared is more than she can guess, he would acknowledge generously), but if he had had a daughter of that age he wouldn't have cared for her to be knocking about in a bar like the Angel, with that particular chap in tow.

" Still, not my pigeon," acknowledged Arthur Crook.

He 'd no idea how soon he was going to have to eat his words.

Outside by the kerb the great black-and-chromium car glistened in the lights from the Angel. Mr. Smith opened the door with a flourish and Gillian stepped inside. It was quite dark and she hadn't realised the car already had an occupant. She started to apologise, but someone invisible said it was quite all right. Then Mr. Smith shut the door and the car drove away. Gillian lay back ; she had a headache coming on, due to the smoky air, she supposed, or the sherry perhaps, that had been uncommonly strong. Something bothered her, something that wasn't quite right. They had been travelling several minutes before she realised what it was. No one had asked her for her address. She shifted to lean forward and tell the driver where to go, but before she could speak she blacked out. Someone put an arm round her : a voice said " O.K."

" Never drink with strange men," said the moralists.

And how right they were.

From her vantage-point at her ground-floor window old Miss Beachcroft was intrigued to see the young man, Richard Fyfe, come rushing up the street, " as though the bears were after him," she said afterwards, and jump the steps two at a time. So that pretty creature, Miss Hinde, hadn't gone to meet him, after all.

The eternal triangle, thought Miss Beachcroft, cosily. Say what you like about the crowds and the expense and the loneliness of being an old woman in London, still there remained a lot to be said for living there. Something was always happening. She glued her ancient nose to the window-pane.

Richard had rung three times with no result before apprehension stabbed him. He was about to ring once more when he heard a door close by being pulled open and feet sounded in the hall. The next instant the old witch from the ground floor, whose proper home, in his opinion, was a blasted heath, pulled the front door wide.

" If it 's Miss Hinde you want," she ogled him, " she 's gone out. She went about half an hour ago, and she 's not back yet."

" Oh, I think you must be mistaken," said Richard at once. " I spoke to her on the telephone a little while ago ; she 's expecting me."

" I dare say she ran out for something she 'd forgotten. There are still a few shops open—Christmas Eve, you know. Perhaps you 'd like to come in and wait."

He thought if her appearance was anything to go by—old red brocade dressing-gown, fur-edged slippers and a tarnished silver scarf—" I bought it in Venice in 1913 " she liked people to know—her room would be as appetising as one of last year's birds'-nests.

" Thanks very much," he said, quickly, " but I'll just go up. She may have left me a message or something."

He caught a glimpse of the room as he went past, and it was just as he 'd supposed. A tray of unwashed tea-things, a patience half set out, a pair of corsets on a chair—Jill ought to see that, it would warn her what happened to women who hadn't anyone to keep a home for. The note she had left was pinned on the door and he read it with growing concern. He knew the Angel, knew it wasn't Jill's cup of tea at all. And she hadn't said a word about it when he rang up. If she wanted to buy something to drink she need have gone no further than the very pleasant little pub at the corner. He stood irresolute for a moment—didn't even notice the door was ajar, then, stuffing the note into his pocket, came down again. Miss Beachcroft was standing at the doorway of her room, expectant as a vulture waiting for something to die.

" There was a message," he told her, since it was obvious she wasn't minded to let him go without a word. " I 'm going along to meet her."

There were quite a number of girls at the Angel when Richard arrived, but none of them remotely resembled Gillian. He looked about him, perplexed, irritated, more apprehensive than ever. He must have missed her after all, and yet—there had been so few people in the streets and no traffic to speak of, certainly neither buses nor taxis. No, she must have tried to take a short cut, which involved going through a number of narrow back streets, and either she was home now or else she 'd irretrievably lost her way. This Christmas that was to have been so perfect—a rehearsal, she had said, for their life together that was going to start so soon—had got off on the wrong foot.

His eye, glancing this way and that, caught the responsive gleam of a bright brown eye belonging to a man who, if you 'd never think of comparing him to Adonis, was sufficiently remarkable to hold the attention. He had a big, red face, spiky red brows, red hair, and a red-brown suit. Catching Richard's gaze, he leaned forward to say, " Looking for someone ? "

" A girl," Richard acknowledged. " I was to pick her up here."

" You young chaps are a rum lot," said Crook, candidly. " It 's not precisely the rendezvous I 'd choose—not for a nice girl, as I 'm sure yours must be." Then, with no change of voice, he added, " What did she look like ? "

Richard tried to describe her, but his best friend must have acknowledged he made rather a hash of it.

" Flashing a handsome blue ring ? " asked Crook, sympathetically.

Richard began to say No, and then stopped, recalling Gillian's eager voice on the telephone.

" Well, yes, she may have—a Christmas present. I haven't seen it myself. Do you mean she 's here ? "

" There was a girl here who could have been yours. Sort of Gainsborough's Blue Girl," he added, brilliantly. " Her first visit, I 'd say. I mean, she obviously didn't look on the Angel as a home from home."

" What happened to her ? " Crook's heart warmed to the anxiety in the keen young voice.

" She went out with as smooth a Charley as ever I set eyes on. Wearing a sizeable ring, too, very natty. Funny, y'know, I never could fancy a fellow who wore a ring." His voice changed. " If she 's your girl you should take more care of her—letting her come to a place like this on her own."

" You 've got it wrong," protested Richard. " I didn't even know she 'd come till I found her note. She promised me she wouldn't go out again to-night."

" Note ? "

" Yes. Pinned on her door. A matter of life and death, she said. I 'd just telephoned to say I 'd be round in half an hour . . ."

(Continued on page 37.

A CHRISTMAS MARKET IN "MERRIE ENGLAND": PREPARING FOR THE FEAST.

There was wealth and plenty in Merrie England of the fourteenth century, before the Wars of the Roses had broken out and the country had become impoverished by years of civil strife; and the jollity of Chaucer's day is evoked in the scene depicted by E. H. Shepard. In the background the shops are well stocked with fat capons and geese, and one thievish lad has snatched a live bird from its rightful owner. A solid burgher, his ample wife seated behind him on pillion, is riding home from market on a sturdy grey. In the foreground a domestic drama is in progress. The young girl is accepting a gift proffered by her favoured suitor, who might well stand as model for Chaucer's young squire of twenty years, "a lover and a lusty bachelor," while his jealous rival is showing anger and disappointment. The girl's mother, who suggests the jovial Wife of Bath, approves her daughter's choice, but Paterfamilias, in a rich furred robe, is not quite so certain; and the priest is eyeing the young man with a somewhat disapproving expression.

From the drawing by E. H. Shepard.

"REGENCY PARADE"—YOUTH AND AGE IN THE ENGLAND OF 1814, WHEN

The Prince Regent—"Prinny" to his intimates of the Carlton House set—later George IV.—and his friend, Beau Brummell, set the tone of the town in manners and fashion in the early years of the nineteenth century. E. H. Shepard's drawing, which might represent a street in London, Bath or Brighton at the period, conjures up a personality parade of Regency days. The sumptuously-dressed Buck, curly whiskers matching the curly brim of his top-hat, obviously modelled himself on the Prince Regent. He is quizzing the heavily-chaperoned girl with impudent enjoyment, and since admiration seldom comes amiss from whatever quarter it is directed, the demure young lady is obviously not displeased by the interest she has aroused; but her middle-aged duenna is showing every sign of anger and alarm as she hurries her

From the drawing

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN OF EUROPE AND BEAU BRUMMELL SET THE TONE.

charge away from danger. Old age as it was over 100 years ago (and seldom is to-day) is represented by the curmudgeon pushed in his wheel-chair by a supercilious man-servant ; and joyous youth, as it always has been, is illustrated by the children. The boy is delighted with his hoop and the girl with her rattle—just as modern children rejoice in a model helicopter or space ship. The brokers' men thundering on the door of an unhappy debtor were a feature of the Regency period, when most fine gentlemen were riddled with debts and considered it to be no crime to owe large sums to tradesmen, though card losses, as "debts of honour," must be met. Only the poodle might have stepped from a present-day scene, for the notion of clipping these favourite pets with a "lion's mane" and a tufted tail is not a recent invention.

by E. H. Shepard.

THE MARRIAGE MARKET IN TUDOR ENGLAND: A BETROTHAL PARTY.

In Tudor times, when the country was guided by the strong hands of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth I., England grew rich and powerful. 'Twas a merry, bustling, extravagant age, and families who were rising in the world sought to cement their importance and wealth by provident alliances for their children. Contracts were often made when bride and bridegroom were still of a very tender age, though the actual wedding did not take place until they were considerably older, though still young by modern standards. This sounds cold-blooded to-day, and yet who is to say that these arranged matches did not prove as happy as many of the present-day love-marriages, which often fail to live up to their early promise. E. H. Shepard has depicted a Betrothal Party in Tudor times, with bride and bridegroom more interested in the handsome pheasants in the garden than in each other. The ladies in the full finery of rich sixteenth-century dress are expressing admiration for the children, while the astute fathers study the contract; and refreshments to celebrate the occasion are being brought.

From the drawing by E. H. Shepard.

"STILL-LIFE"—WHICH DECEIVES THE EYE AND IMPRESSES THE MIND WITH THE VANITY OF LIFE'S PLEASURES; BY N. L. PESCHIER (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY). (*By courtesy of Mr. Claude B. Rutch.*)

Continued.] painting and by the use of wood inlay. An outstanding example of the latter may be seen in the Ducal Palace, Urbino, where a small room contains what appear to be half-open cupboards with grills, behind which pieces of armour and musical instruments can be descried. So skilfully are these objects simulated that the temptation to attempt to close the doors of the cupboards is almost irresistible. Amusing fancies in *Trompe-l'œil* paintings are multiple, and some of the strangest are the eighteenth-century Dutch painters' "picture furniture." These canvases represent such objects as desks and tables, and are cut out to follow their outlines. They were meant to stand in the distant corner of a room.

"A CUPBOARD"—A TREASURE-HOUSE OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RICHES WHICH MIGHT TEMPT A BURGLAR; BY FRANCISCUS GYSBRECHTS (ACTIVE LEYDEN *c.* 1674). (*By courtesy of Mrs. Charlotte Frank.*)

THE popularity of *Trompe-l'œil*, or painting to trick the eye into believing flat surfaces to be three-dimensional, goes back to the days of Ancient Greece, for in 400 B.C. there was rivalry between two artists, Zeuxis and Parrhasius. It was agreed that in order to decide which was the greater, each should exhibit an example of his work before a panel of judges. Zeuxis showed a painting of a bunch of grapes, so realistic that birds flew down to peck at the fruit. Parrhasius then brought out his painting and set it before the judges. "Lift the curtain which covers your work," they ordered, but this could not be done, for the curtain was the picture. Parrhasius was then adjudged the winner. The art of painting in this super-realistic manner has been practised by artists since that remote date and still rouses interest and admiration. During the fifteenth century illusory effects were obtained both by

[*Continued above right*

ART IN CAP AND BELLS: *TROMPE-L'ŒIL* MASTERPIECES DESIGNED TO CHEAT THE EYE BY THEIR ASTONISHING EFFECT OF REALITY.

"THE CHERRY STEALER PUNISHED"—BY H. FIMMERS. SIGNED. PAINTED c. 1860. *(By courtesy of the Earl of Hardwicke.)*

"A PORTRAIT"—COVERED BY AN IMITATION OF BROKEN GLASS. FRENCH SCHOOL, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. *(By courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Alexis Kürner.)*

"CAMELLIAS"—WITH A LIVELY LIZARD DISAPPEARING INTO A CRACK IN THE WALL; BY PETER STEBBING. CONTEMPORARY. *(By courtesy of Mr. Thomas Upcher.)*

"RAINBOW"—RIBBON BOWS READY TO BE PICKED UP; BY MARTIN BATTERSBY. CONTEMPORARY. *(By courtesy of Colonel F. B. Beddington.)*

ART IN CAP AND BELLS: *TROMPE-L'ŒIL* MASTERPIECES DESIGNED TO CHEAT THE EYE BY THEIR ASTONISHING EFFECT OF REALITY.

Trompe-l'œil, the representation of objects with such exactitude that the eye is actually tricked into seeing them in three-dimensional form, is a branch of painting which, at its best, combines decorative charm with a puckish teasing quality, and has tickled the fancy of men and women since classic times. To-day representational portraiture and topographical landscape may have lost their appeal for many, but a still-life painted with convincing and meticulous verisimilitude exercises a potent spell on practically everyone. Art with a Jester's Cap and Bells is irresistible even to the children of the present age. On this and other pages of this issue we reproduce in colour a number of particularly fine *Trompe-l'œil* paintings—both by living painters and by artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

ENGLISH BEAUTY AND DOMESTICITY: "THE HUSBAND AND WIFE", BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

This charmingly rural domestic group of a young couple is an example of Gainsborough's Ipswich period paintings of the middle 1750's. It was at one time called "Gainsborough and His Wife," later known as "Thomas Sandby and His Wife," and is now catalogued as "Le Ménage" ("The Husband and Wife").

By courtesy of the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

ELIZABETH II., QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH;
BY PIETRO ANNIGONI.

Copyright of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers.

FLEMISH BEAUTY AND INFORMALITY: HÉLÈNE FOURMENT, BY SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS.

Many painters have used their wives as models, but Hélène Fourment, beautiful second wife of Rubens, perhaps sat to her husband more frequently, and in a greater variety of costumes and poses, than any other artist's wife has done. The lovely work we reproduce shows her in an informal aspect—no doubt as Rubens saw her daily in their home.

The Illustrated London News

AN accretion of good stories has gathered round the art of *Trompe-l'œil* painting—that is, of producing pictures designed to deceive the eye, examples of which we illustrate on this and other pages. One of the best is in connection with Holbein, the Younger. When he lived in Bâle, he was young and convivial. Commissioned to paint a mural of a dance of peasants on the walls of a public ballroom, he devised a method by which he could absent himself without fear of discovery by his patron, who was anxious that the work should be finished without delay. As Holbein had to work seated on a scaffolding, he painted a pair of legs apparently hanging below the structure on which he should have been perched, so that, at a casual glance, this *Trompe-l'œil* device would convince his

[*Continued below, right.*

"STILL-LIFE"—OBJECTS WHICH SEEM READY TO BE LIFTED FROM THE RACK FOR USE; BY EDWART COLLIER (*D.* 1702). SIGNED.
(By courtesy of Mr. Charles J. Robertson.)

"STILL-LIFE"—BOOKS WHOSE DISORDER SHOULD SHOCK THE BIBLIOPHILE INTO AN ATTEMPT TO TIDY THEM; BY PARKIN.
(By courtesy of Mr. Ronald A. Lee, D.F.C.)

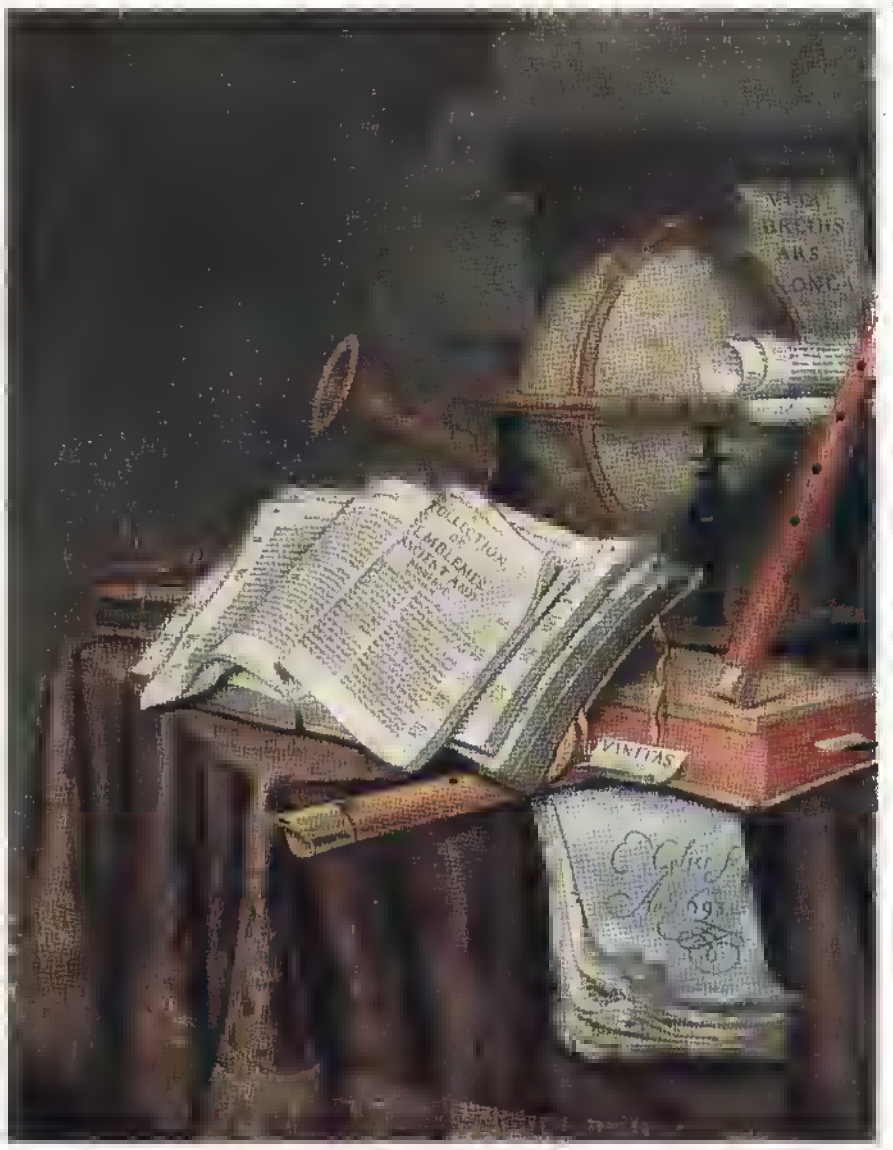
Continued.]
employer that the painter was at work. Rembrandt, too, is said to have played a joke on the burghers of Amsterdam by painting so life-like a representation of a servant closing the shutters that passers-by were taken in. *Trompe-l'œil* also can achieve illusion in architectural decoration—false perspectives in salons, frescoes which transform a flat roof into an illusory dome, and present statues in niches on what is really a flat wall. Among these are such masterpieces as the Veronese frescoes at the Villa Maser, by which the eye is induced to believe in architectural features which are but simulated and to take a painted figure opening a door for a living personage. Equal to those in illusion and fantasy are the decorations of the Palazzo del Te, Mantua.

ART IN CAP AND BELLS: *TROMPE-L'ŒIL* MASTERPIECES DESIGNED TO CHEAT THE EYE BY THEIR ASTONISHING EFFECT OF REALITY.

"MAGAZINES, LETTERS AND DRAWINGS"—BY DAVID PAYNE (1843-1894), DATED 1877. *(By courtesy of Mr. Ernest I. Musgrave.)*

"POMPON ROUGE"—AND PAPERS WITH TORN EDGES; BY L. ROY HOBDELL. SIGNED AND DATED 1945. OIL ON BOARD. *(By courtesy of Mr. G. I. Shaw.)*

"VIOLIN HANGING ON A WALL"—BY GEORGES BECKER (*B.* 1845-6). SIGNED AND DATED 1911. *(By courtesy of Mrs. Larry Adler.)*



"STILL-LIFE"—INCLUDING A BOOK WHOSE PAGES WAIT TO BE TURNED; BY EDWART COLLIER (*D.* 1702). SIGNED AND DATED 1693. *(By courtesy of Messrs. Leggatt Bros.)*

ART IN CAP AND BELLS: *TROMPE-L'ŒIL* MASTERPIECES DESIGNED TO CHEAT THE EYE BY THEIR ASTONISHING EFFECT OF REALITY.

The *Trompe-l'œil* paintings reproduced on this page are of a favourite character, representing, as they do, papers, pens and letters stuck in racks, musical instruments hung against wood panelling, or objects arranged carelessly on shelves. They are all designed to tempt the beholder into feeling that he might stretch out his hand and pick up one of the strangely-assorted collection of things represented. There 's nothing new in such a joke, and yet it never becomes stale, and we can still smile when we recall that the young genius Giotto is said, when left alone in the studio of his master Cimabue, to have painted a fly on the face of a figure in a picture on which the Master was working. When Cimabue returned, Giotto no doubt derived great pleasure and amusement from watching his teacher—a very important man—attempting to brush the creature off the canvas; and then registering surprise and, one may guess, admiration, when he realised that it had been painted with such accuracy.

THE BEAUTY OF EARLY GIRLHOOD: "HEAD OF A GIRL", BY FEDERIGO BAROCCIO.

The young girl whose dark Italian beauty Baroccio (1528-1612) painted came, no doubt, from a great family. Her dark eyes are wise, in spite of her youth, and she would seem well qualified to walk with wary steps through the mazes of Italian Court intrigue.

Reproduced by Courtesy of Mrs. John Foy.

THE BEAUTY OF EARLY GIRLHOOD: "LADY CATHERINE HAMILTON",
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

The high-bred beauty of Lady Catherine Hamilton, second daughter of the 1st Marquess of Abercorn, was strikingly captured by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A. (1769-1830), who painted this portrait of her when she was about seven years old. She married the 4th Earl of Aberdeen in 1805.

Reproduced by Courtesy of his Grace the Duke of Abercorn.

THE BEAUTY OF EARLY GIRLHOOD: "MISS JANE ALLNUTT";
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

Innocence and childish beauty are combined in the winning face of Miss Jane Allnutt, who sat to Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A. (1769-1830), one of the most famous artists of his day, at a very early age. She might stand as a typical infant beauty of the "English Rose" type, for which this country is famous.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Laing Galleries, Toronto.

THE BEAUTY OF EARLY GIRLHOOD: "A YOUNG GIRL";
BY WEEDON GROSSMITH.

This work-a-day English girl of the '80's faces life with sweet determination. Weedon Grossmith (1854-1919), who painted her, studied at the R.A. Schools and the Slade and exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery before going on the stage in 1888 to achieve fame as a comedian.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the City of York Art Gallery.

Continued from page 20

"And Juliet's proper place is the balcony," Crook approved. "I couldn't agree with you more. Not that I 'm much of a balcony hound myself. No mention of Charley in the note, I take it?"

"None." He pulled the bit of paper out of his pocket. "It must have been something quite unexpected. Did you say she left with this chap?"

Crook nodded. "And, unless my ears are missing a beat, in the sort of car no honest man can afford to run these days, unless he gets it on expenses. A *Panther*, big, vulgar affair like a night-club." He spoke with some derision, recalling his own ancient yellow Rolls, that caught every eye, and no wonder, he 'd tell you, the "Old Superb." He was aware that Richard's anxiety had changed to something much stronger.

"Look here," he said, "I don't know who you are . . ."

"Crook 's the name," said the big, brown man, obligingly. "Arthur Crook, and trouble is my business." He hauled a card out of his pocket. "123, Bloomsbury Street 's where I operate, and praise the pigs no one 's thought of a closed shop for lawyers, because if anyone put me on to a forty-hour week I 'd go off my nut. I work all round the clock when the work's there, and if it ain't I go out and look for it. Same as now," he added.

"I don't get it," said Richard, who wasn't paying much attention to any of this. "What on earth would bring a girl like Jill to this place at a minute's notice?"

"Got the note there?" Crook asked.

Richard pushed it at him. Crook looked at it for a moment, then said politely, "Code? I don't follow. This looks to me like a telephone number."

Richard turned the slip over. Crook read through the note and handed the paper back.

"She could have been a bit more forthcoming," he acknowledged. "Matter of fact, I can tell you one thing; she didn't come empty-handed. She had something with her—don't ask me what it was—but I saw her hand a packet of some sort to this chap. After that they had a drink . . ."

"It can't have been Jill," Richard broke out, and Crook said easily, "Well, that should be simple. I dare say you 've got a picture of the young lady somewhere about you."

Blushing in a manner highly unbecoming to a man who meant to have his plate up within the year, Richard drew a photograph out of his wallet.

"That 's her," said Crook, with no hesitation at all. "I don't say she 's the most beautiful girl I ever saw, but she 's got something. That 's why I didn't care for the company she was keeping. Now, look, we don't want to make prize idiots of ourselves; it could be it 's all on the up-and-up" (though his expression said that pigs might fly, only he 'd never seen them do it), "and she may be home by now, wondering what 's happened to you. There 's a call-box in the passage, and I dare say you don't have to look up her number . . ."

He hadn't time to finish the sentence before Richard disappeared. He was back a couple of minutes later, his brow as black as the fog.

"I don't like it," he announced abruptly, "In fact, it stinks. Know what this number is?" He indicated the slip of paper he 'd taken off Gillian's door. "The number of this pub. What does that add up to to you?"

"That she rang up and made a date," returned Crook, simply. "If someone had rung her, she wouldn't have troubled to write the number down. She came here to hand over a parcel—maybe she brought it home by mistake or something."

"With his name and address on it? Anyhow, if that 's the answer, why didn't he come to fetch it at the flat?"

"You wouldn't have liked that any better," was Crook's grim reply. "I 'm no young maiden myself, but I 'd as soon find a wolf on the doorstep as that catastrophe in human shape she went off with. Well, that 's the way it is, son. Question is, where do we go from here?"

"If I could find the chap responsible for this," said Richard, with classic simplicity, "I 'd break his ruddy neck for him, and I don't mean maybe."

Gillian opened her eyes to see the unaccustomed snow swirling past the window and to hear the sound of church bells ringing triumphantly to announce one more anniversary of the coming of the Prince of Peace. She lay very still, aware that she had passed through some ordeal of whose nature she was still in doubt, waiting for consciousness to become complete, as on other occasions she had waited to watch the new light struggle into the sky. Glancing cautiously about her, she found herself in an unfamiliar room, lying on an unfamiliar bed. A small coal-fire burned in the hearth, throwing shadows on the ceiling. Somewhere a clock ticked. So far as she could discover, she was quite alone.

After a minute she made a movement to sit up, and realised immediately that whatever had overtaken her the night before had left a physical legacy of languor and discomfort. Her head ached and there seemed loaded balls behind her eyes.

"Where am I?" she wondered aloud, putting one hand to her forehead.

In the corner someone stirred. "Are you feeling any better?" said a voice, and a pleasant-looking middle-aged woman swam into view. "As to where you are, you 're in my house. A more pertinent question would be: Who are you? and what on earth were you doing on a bench on the Embankment at ten o'clock last night?"

At the sound of the unexpected voice Gillian turned sharply and a red-hot needle seemed to pierce her temples.

"Now, don't talk till you 're ready," advised the stranger. She came over and took the girl's wrist between competent fingers. "You 're perfectly safe so long as you stay here."

"Did you say I was on the Embankment?"

"When I found you. It was the merest chance, anyway. I happened to be driving home, and I caught sight of you, and somehow you didn't look the sort of girl who should be sitting there at that hour. Though sitting is rather complimentary. You were all slumped over. I thought at first—well, never mind that. You 're all right now, or soon will be, according to the doctor."

"The doctor?"

"I called him in. Well, I felt responsible for you. There was no way of telling who you were or where you lived . . ."

She made a great effort. "My address was in my bag."

"My dear, you hadn't any bag."

"It was in my hand when I left the Angel."

"The Angel?" The woman's brows creased. "Do you mean the Underground station?"

"No. It 's a public-house . . ."

"Ah! So that 's why . . . My dear, haven't you a mother?"

"She 's dead," said the girl rather shortly. "So 's my father."

"So you 've no one?"

"There 's Richard."

"Who 's Richard?"

"Oh! A friend." She couldn't discuss Richard with a stranger, no matter how kind. But the woman persisted.

"Was he with you at the Angel?"

"No. I went there to meet someone . . ."

The woman sighed. "How old are you? You hardly look more than sixteen now. It 's the old story, I suppose. You had one and then you had another and—did you know this man?"

"No. I didn't say it was a man," she added.

"Do girls meet each other at public-houses nowadays? What was this Richard of yours doing, letting you run about meeting other men?"

"He didn't know." A fresh thought struck her. "Is it Christmas Day?"

"Of course. Can't you hear the bells?"

She sat up higher against the pillows, fighting against the sickness.

"I must get in touch with him at once. He 'll be worried to death."

The woman put out a capable hand and restrained her. "It 's no good your meeting him till you 've got things straight in your own mind. What happened after you left the Angel?"

"I don't know—I don't remember. Only there was a car. He said he was going to give me a lift home."

"Who was?"

"I don't know. The man called Smith, the one I took the parcel to, said he had a friend going my way."

"What parcel was that?"

"One I 'd promised to deliver—for an old man called Benn in a shop near Paxton Market." The mists were dissolving now. "And Smith said it was urgent, a prescription for his wife, and she must have it that night. And when I got to the Angel he made me drink a glass of sherry and said this friend . . ." She paused. "Wait a minute. There was something wrong. I remember that. But I don't remember what. It was just then everything became swimmy . . ."

"And all this happened last night?"

"Yes. It must have been about half-past seven. I promised Richard I wouldn't go out again; I told him. . . . Oh, please, I must ring him up."

"You 're not fit to ring anyone at the moment. Anyway, the telephone 's downstairs. Why not give me his number and I 'll ring through? I don't think you told me his other name."

But she didn't like that idea. It seemed of paramount importance she should speak to him herself, making him understand this nightmare as no one else could do.

"Tell me about him," said the woman, gently.

"There isn't anything, really. Just that we 're going to be married. . . ." Her voice softened. "He was coming to dinner last night—it was going to be the best Christmas ever, and now, now . . ."

To her horror she found the tears squeezing between her lids. "You do see what happened, don't you?" she pleaded. "What must have happened? There was something in that sherry. I mean, one glass wouldn't knock me out. And I remember now he made me drink it. And then he said the car was at the door. It was a very big car," she added vaguely. "And there was someone inside already."

"Who was that?"

"I don't know. It 's coming back in bits, like a jig-saw puzzle. I have to fit them together. It was a plot, of course."

"Why on earth should anyone want to plot against you?"

"I don't know. It doesn't make sense, does it?"

"And why dump you on the Embankment?"

"Well," protested Gillian, reasonably, "they 'd have to leave me somewhere."

"If they 'd got the parcel why shouldn't they let you go home?"

"Perhaps because of it, what was in it, I mean. He said it was a prescription for his wife, who was sick, but he didn't look like a man whose wife is ill. I remember thinking that at the time."

"What were you doing in the old man's shop?"

"There was a ring in the window—" Her glance fell automatically to her hand. The next instant she had started up. "It 's gone," she cried. "My ring 's gone. My beautiful blue ring."

The woman was looking at her oddly. "My dear," she said, "I 'm old enough to be your mother. You needn't be afraid of what you tell me. Are you sure that 's just what happened? Are you sure you didn't have rather more than one glass of sherry and—well, get just a little tipsy and lose your road home? You might so easily drop down on a bench—or perhaps someone snatched your bag and the ring with it. Was it valuable?"

"I paid five pounds for it. I don't know what it was worth. No, it wasn't valuable, it was just beautiful. I thought Richard would like it as much as I did. Oh, please, let me telephone Richard. If it were

the other way round and it was he who was missing, I should be quite, quite mad. With fear, I mean."

"You 're very much in love, aren't you ?" said the woman gently. She sat hy the bed and held Gillian's hand. "The doctor 's coming in a minute, and if he says you can get up you shall dress at once." She stroked the girl's cheek. "It 'll come out all right in the end, I 'm sure it will. Can I trust you to lie quiet for five minutes while I make you a cup of coffee ?

"You 're very kind," said Gillian, her voice still trembling.

"My dear, I 've got a daughter of my own about your age."

She went out of the room. Before she returned the front-door bell rang and Gillian heard the sound of voices.

"Come in," said the woman clearly. "Yes, she 's awake. She remembers quite a lot. I 've told her you 're coming. She wants to get in touch with someone called Richard,"

"So do we," said a man's voice. "We want to find out quite a lot about the young lady."

The door opened and a tall man came in. "Sitting up and taking notice ?" he asked, genially. "This isn't precisely how one would choose to start Christmas Day . . ."

But Gillian said nothing. She lay frozen against the pillows. For this wasn't a stranger, someone she 'd never met before ; this was a face she had seen hanging in a patch of darkness between the swing-doors of the Angel not much more than twelve hours ago. She hadn't been meant to see it, of course ; sbe 'd looked up and there it had been, reflected in the mirror ; and the head had nodded and the man who called himself Smith had laughed, and said, "Ready ?" and they 'd got up—and the horror had begun.

"Aren't you going to wish me a Merry Christmas ?" said the voice, and as he spoke the door opened again and the woman came in.

"This is Dr. Belvedere," she announced.

At that Gillian found her voice. "Oh, no," she said. "He isn't a doctor. I know him now. He 's the driver of the car that took me away from the Angel last night, aud you—of course—you 're the one who was in the car—your story about finding me on the Embankment is all a lie. You 're in the plot too—oh, isn't there anyone to be on my side ?" The tears were shaking her voice, but she fought them back.

The woman came over to the bed and caught her hand. "There 's Richard," she said, softly. "You hadn't forgotten him, had you ? You 're going to ring him up, aren't you ? Oh, yes, I think you will. I think you 're going to do evcrything we say. Because, if you don't . . ."

But she wouldn't, all the same. They were quite angry, quite rough with her before she was able to convince them that she didn't propose to betray Richard. They realised it was hopeless, at last ; she wouldn't even tell them how much Richard knew. And when they saw they were wasting their time the woman caught her arm, and the man produced a syringe, and though she struggled, she was no match for the pair of them. She felt the prick, felt her arm tossed roughly down, and almost at once, for the second time in twenty-four hours, she swam away into the dark.

There was to be no rest for Richard this Christmas Eve. Long after he was convinced of the futility of such action, he found himself pulling open the doors of telephone booths, slipping his coppers into the slot and dialling Gillian's number. Every time, as the bell began to ring, his heart pounded in unison, and every time it rang to a despairing silence. On—and on—and on. Yet, though he went back into the street swearing he 'd make no further effort, he had but to pass another box to remind his ravaged heart that this night was the anniversary of the greatest miracle the world has ever known, and in he went again, click, click, click, went the pennies—and always with the same result. He even paid another visit to Gordon Street ; this time there was no need to ring the bell, for Miss Beachcroft was watching avidly from the wiudow and came scuttling into the hall to assure him there was no news.

"Have you tried the hospitals ?" she demanded, twitching her ancient crimson garment round her shapeless form. "Anyone could be knocked down on a night like this."

Richard hrushed past her, taking the stairs two at a time, till he reached the third floor. It was then that he discovered the door on the latch and pushed it open. When he saw the hrave, gay preparations she had made, the happy tree, the parcels tied with silk ribbons, the cards strung along the wall, he almost forgot his manhood. If he had been tempted for one second to doubt her good faith, this would have reassured him, but, in fact, no such temptation had assailed his tormented heart. He was as sure of her love as he was of his own, had a terrifying glimpse of what loneliness could mean for the un-companioned, the undesired and the bereaved.

There was no further message here, and he came down with a new resolve in his mind. Gillian's disappearance was connected in some way with this fellow Benn, from whom she 'd bought the ring. Evidence ? Crook might have murmured, and of course there was none. But—what was in the parcel and where had she found it ? If she hadn't got it from Benn . . . but she hadn't spoken of it over the telephone. Perhaps someone had called her up after she 'd spoken to him. Perhaps—perhaps. At all events, he couldn't rest and was in the mood of desperation when men snatch at straws. If Benn knew anything he was going to talk. The telephone directory showed quite a number of Benns, but only one who appeared to answer to his requirements. Benn, H., Marine Store Dealer. That would be the fellow. Richard got out his little car and turned east.

Mr. Benn's shop was as shuttered as the ancient tombs of one of his own ancestors ; no amount of ringing and knocking called forth any response. There wasn't even anything to indicate that the old man actually lived on the premises, no private door, no card. The rooms over the shop might he used as storerooms—Richard couldn't tell. One thing was obvious, no one was coming down to the door to-night, and though he peered industriously, like some night animal after its prey, he couldn't detect a gleam of light anywhere.

"Probably gone off somewhere for Christmas," Richard supposed, taking stock of his environment. There appeared to be no residential quarters on either side of the shop. A large building with a blank wall, that was probably a factory, stood on one side and a door leading to a work-yard on the other ; the little shop was sandwiched, like a very thin slice of meat between two hunks of bread, amid these formidable walls. There was a bomb-site opposite, where nothing remained but part of a wall, a basement window-frame, bricks among which the coarse grass flourished, and a fair amount of rubbish shot there in defiance of restrictions. The only life he discerned was a thin, young black cat, which streaked off the site, looking like a bit of black velvet with a shining green stone in it, that was her eye. He didn't stop to wonder, as a clod like Arthur Crook would have done, what brought her out so suddenly, and it didn't occur to him to look over the broken wall, and so it was he never saw the shadow moving in that world of shadows, a bit of flotsam in a lost world, who leaned over the smashed brickwork and thoughtfully watched him go.

After that there was nothing for it hut to try the hospitals and every other source of information who might know about accidents, fatal and otherwise ; every time he got a connection his heart leaped like a fish on a string, and always the reply was the same. He had an uneasy feeling that he was making a prize fool of himself, that whenever a receiver was replaced on its rest someone at the other end was grinning. Another chap taken for a ride, they 'd think, and his own heart sickened anew. Oh, if anyone had been taken for a ride, it wasn't he, hut Gillian, his dear love, who, hy some appalling misfortune, in which he could still scarcely believe, had been whirled away in a car—the sort of car no honest man can afford to run—and was now—where ?

Next morning he woke with a start, wondering what was wrong. He hadn't expected to sleep at all, and was rather ashamed that he had been able to do so. Then it all came surging back, and he couldn't believe it at first. Things like this don't happen, he exclaimed, but that was all tommy-rot. Of course they happened ; you read about them in the papers five days out of seven. What he meant was, nothing like this had ever happened to him before. He snatched up the telephone and defiantly rang Gillian's number. Perhaps this time someone would lift the receiver, her voice would say, "Hallo, darling. . . ." He felt he would scarcely ask her for an explanation if only he could hear her voice again. But, naturally, nothing of the sort happened. The bell pealed away as heartless as the hright morning light, and at last he gave up and put the receiver hack on its rest.

The morning passed somehow ; he envied bus conductors and clergy-men taking services, and people cooking Christmas dinners, because they had something to do. He had forgotten that, in Gillian's absence, he had nowhere to go on what was known as the family feast ; he went into a restaurant where he wasn't likely to see anybody he knew and ate some-thing—it could have been sawdust chips for all he could have told you—and then, because he could stand inaction no longer, he got into his car and once more drove down past Aldgate Pump.

Mr. Benn's shop looked much the same by day as it had done last evening, except that he could see it better ; but there was one change. On the step stood a small bottle of milk;

"So the old so-and-so does live here, and seeing he hasn't cancelled his milk order, he hasn't gone away," Richard reflected. "Well, I 'll get him this time, if I have to tear the place down, brick by brick."

It looked as though he might be driven even to these lengths, for no amount of knocking or ringing brought the sound of footsteps, or, indeed, any indication of life. He became very cunning, ringing the bell and stepping back into the middle of the road to make sure no one was huddling behind curtains at an upper window. But all the windows were closed.

"But the curtains aren't drawn over them," he told himself. "There must be someone there."

It didn't occur to him that perhaps they 'd never been drawn last night.

Realising the impossibility of hreaking in through the shutters, Richard now began to explore for an entry by the rear. A narrow lane ran behind the factory and ended in a *cul-de-sac*, with a high wall obviously enclosing the workyard on Mr. Benn's further side. And in the wall behind Mr. Benn's house he found a shahby wooden door that must once have been hlue but was so discoloured hy time and weather that now it had no colour at all. To his surprise, this opened easily. It never occurred to him that there might be a trap, that other men were at least as intelligent and far-sighted as he ; it didn't even pass through his mind that he might have been seen talking to Crook the previous night—and at this stage he 'd no idea that in the underworld Crook was as readily recognised as a Sinatra or a Ray hy bobby-soxers in a rather different *milieu*. On the further side of the door was a little paved yard and an outside privy. And beyond these was the back door of the shop. He advanced, banging mightily and arousing nothing but local echoes, and was about to make a frenzied attack, when it came into his mind to turn the handle. The door opened under his grasp and he found himself in a narrow stone passage, very dark, because there were no windows and no light was hurning. He switched on the torch he habitually carried. The passage led past a flight of stone steps, giving, he supposed, on to a store-room or coal-cellar. He flashed his light on the stairs, and then stood very still, holding his hreath. Because there was something at the foot, something dark and unmoving, like an old sack, hut, he was con-vinced, not an old sack. He went down quickly, his breath catching in his throat. It was easy to understand now why Mr. Benn had let the bells ring unchecked and paid no heed to the hammering on the door.

"He must have been dead several hours," reflected Richard, straightening himself at last. "Probably was lying here last night."

But what connection had that bit of human wreckage with happy Gillian Hinde ?

" Wonder what he was coming down here for in the dark," Richard reflected, and Crook himself couldn't have experienced a more startling reaction. From the instant of his discovery, he had been uncomfortably convinced that there was something wrong about the scene, something missing, and now he knew what it was. Light. Since Gillian had talked with the old man not earlier than six o'clock, it followed that it must have been quite dark when he started on his downward journey. Yet no light was burning and, search where he might, Richard could find no trace of torch or candle. He bent again above the little, shrivelled face, and a worse fear struck him. This was no accident. A man tripping and falling on those sharp-edged steps would show signs of his fall, there 'd be bruises, abrasions, the hands would be outflung to try and save himself; and though there might well be facial injuries, these wouldn't be on the appalling scale the torch revealed when Richard gently turned the body over. He leaned against the wall, feeling pretty sick.

" Someone picked him up and deliberately chucked him down the stairs," he said aloud, and the sound of his own voice was shocking in the half-dark. " Nothing else would account for the fact that the bones of one side of the face were stove in, but there 's practically no other surface injury."

Blood was sprinkled profusely on the stones where the dead man lay, but there were no traces of blood on the steps themselves. And then he perceived something else. (" Quite the little Sherlock Holmes," said Crook, drily, when he heard later.) On the stairs the dust lay thick; his own feet had left marks. But there were no other footmarks discernible.

" I shall have to get the police now," he thought. " This is murder."

And, as though that most dreadful of words had opened a door and let in a host of fiends, he understood that in the hands of whoever was responsible for this outrage against human dignity and human rights lay Gillian, whom he loved and who, surely, waited for him to come and save her. Anger, pain and fear all swirled together in his heart. It was like someone hanging a knocker in his head. He forgot his pity for the dead man, even forgot about ringing the police—(the police ?—the only man likely to help him now was Arthur Crook)—and he came surging out of the back door like a storm-cloud, to be brought up short on the step by an apparition so unexpected that for the moment it seemed a chimera of his overwrought imagination, and he lunged forward as if to walk through it.

The apparition put out a large, powerful arm in a blue sleeve.

" Good afternoon, Sir," said the police officer. " Were you looking for someone ? "

The shock of discovering poor Mr. Benn and then running slap into a constable seemed to paralyse Richard's natural good sense.

" Where on earth did you spring from ? " he demanded. " And what do you want ? "

It is very hard to discompose the police. " I was asking you, Sir," said P.C. Oliver, his voice still perfectly pleasant, but as unyielding as a Sten gun.

" I came to see someone."

" Yes, Sir ? ' Did you come the front way ? "

" Of course not. It 's locked, presumably from the inside. I got in the same way you did. What made you follow me ? Did I leave the gate ajar ? "

" As a matter of fact, you did, but that isn't why. Someone telephoned the police that a man had been noticed stealing up the back way, and seeing it was Christmas and the place might be untenanted, they thought we might be interested."

Richard burst into a staccato laugh. " I can't imagine that at the best of times there could be much here worth taking," he remarked.

" No, Sir ? " Richard sobered suddenly. What an idiotic thing to have said. Why, there could be hundreds of pounds' worth of stuff on the premises for all he knew. " Did you—er—find anyone at home ? "

Richard threw his hand up to cover his mouth. There was something so absurdly formal about this chap, asking if he 'd found anyone at home, when you realised, in fact, what he had found. . . .

" Yes," he said after a minute. " He 's at home all right—you 'll find him at the bottom of the stairs. Matter of fact, I was going to call you."

The policeman marched into the house with Richard at his side. " Down there," said the young doctor. " And—he doesn't seem to have left any footprints in the dust."

The policeman turned sharply. " Meaning, Sir ? "

" Meaning, I don't think it was an accident. I 'm a doctor," he added, feeling for his driving licence. " Naturally, you 'll get your own police surgeon, but I fancy his opinion will be the same as mine."

P.C. Oliver went sturdily down the stairs; there wasn't really any need to hesitate. No one, thought Richard, could have been more dead.

" Did you say he was a friend of yours ? " enquired the constable.

" Living, I never set eyes on him."

" And yet you wanted to see him so badly you came in by the back ? But never mind about telling me now, Sir. I 'll have to let my sergeant know what 's happened, and you 'll be asked for a statement in due course." He came up the stairs and stood looking left and right. " Where would the telephone be ? " he enquired.

" How should I know ? I 've never been in the house before."

The officer opened a door and revealed the dismembered instrument. For the first time he allowed his dismay to penetrate his official composure.

" Cut ! " he observed. " With a knife, I 'd say. That 's queer."

" Isn't murder generally queer ? " Richard demanded.

" Murder ? As to that we don't know how the deceased came to his end, not till we have the official report."

" I 'll let you into a secret," said Richard, bitterly. " The deceased met his death through being slung down that flight of stairs as if he were a sack of old garbage; his face was smashed, as you saw, by the stone corridor."

" Are you going to offer that as evidence ? " asked the policeman.

Richard shrugged. " I haven't any evidence to give, beyond the fact that I found him. At all events, I 'm the first person to inform the police."

He found his companion regarding him rather oddly.

Richard coloured. " Well, all right," he said. " I hadn't got round to calling you. Some other fellow got in first. Which reminds me, what happened to him ? "

" He didn't stop," said Oliver, stolidly. " It 's a funny thing how perfectly respectable people fight shy of the police. Of course, he might have thought there was more than one of you. . . . There 's a booth at the corner. I 'll call my sergeant from that."

As they came round the side of the factory the policeman jerked his thumb towards Richard's little car.

" That yours, Sir ? "

" That 's right. What of it ? You 're not trying to run me in for a parking offence, I suppose ? Well, then, what 's it all about ? You aren't by any chance casting me for the murderer ? Good Heavens, I never saw him before and, anyway, he 's been dead the better part of twenty-four hours, I 'd say."

" Quite so, Sir. Perhaps I should tell you that a car resembling yours, a *Moonbeam* 8, and the same colour, was seen standing outside this house last night. Perhaps you could tell me where you were, round about ten o'clock. Would that be roughly the hour the gentleman was killed ? "

An inspector called Oldfield and a sergeant named Waters took over the case. When the police car arrived Richard felt quite dazed, it seemed as if half the Yard must be tumbling out; but they soon resolved themselves into doctor, fingerprint expert, photographer, etc. The doctor's diagnosis as to cause of death tallied with Richard's.

" Some time last night," he said. " Impossible to be very sure. This passage is like an ice-box. Must have been killed instantly, neck broken. Most likely a man's crime, if you 're asking my opinion," he added. " A big chap. . . ." It was just chance, of course, that his eyes rested for a moment on Richard, who stood six foot two in his socks.

" I wonder if you 'd care to come along to the station and make a statement," suggested Oldfield. " I 'm rather in the dark as to why you were here at all, if the deceased wasn't a friend of yours."

" Do you ever go to the films ? " asked Richard.

The Inspector looked pardonably startled. " Sometimes, if my wife wants to see a picture. . . . Why ? "

" Because you won't need to go to one for a long while after hearing my story. It begins with a girl . . ."

After he 'd finished speaking, the Inspector said, " But what made you so sure that Benn had anything to do with it ? "

" I wasn't. But the trouble started after she bought the ring. And the ring must be mixed up in it somehow, because Crook saw this chap make some reference to it. I don't pretend to understand. . . ." He stopped when he saw the chagrined expression on Oldfield's face.

" Did you say Crook ? Would that be . . . ? "

"Arthur Crook. He 's a lawyer. I 've got his card somewhere. Why ? Do you know him ? "

" Couldn't you trust him to come muscling in on a job like this ? " muttered the Inspector. " Know him ? Of course we do. I suppose I shouldn't be surprised to hear he 's mixed up in this. One of these days he 'll fall out of the skin of the Derby winner. So he saw Miss Hinde at the Angel. A regular haunt of hers ? "

" I doubt if she 'd ever been there before."

" Did Crook happen to notice if she went out with anyone ? "

" I told you, he thinks she was given a lift—since when no one 's seen her. That is, no one I 've been able to come across. Look here, Inspector, what is all this ? You didn't seem surprised when you heard of peculiar doings at the Angel."

" I wasn't," admitted Oldfield. " Dr. Fyfe, how long have you known Miss Hinde ? "

" How long ? Oh, about eight months. Since I came to the hospital. What on earth 's that got to do with it ? "

" Do you know her family, by any chance ? "

" She hasn't any, not in England. There 's a married brother in Germany, and a sister in Scotland. That 's all."

" But you know—that is, you have mutual acquaintances ? "

" Only at the hospital."

" I see."

" Perhaps," said Richard, holding on to his temper with an effort, " you 'd be good enough to tell me what you see."

" I 'll be frank with you," said Oldfield. " We 've had our eye on a gang of dope-peddlers for quite a while now. We knew the stuff was being passed, and we could put our hands on one or two of the small fry. But that doesn't help. As soon as we show the smallest interest in any of them something happens. You may have seen a mention in the papers of a chap found floating in the dock recently ? We 've every reason to suppose he was one of them and—well, a chain 's as strong as its weakest link, and sometimes your best policy is to shorten the chain and get rid of the faulty link."

" I see," said Richard. " And this chap, Benn, was another link."

" Looks remarkably like it."

" And—oh, no, Inspector, that 's crazy. You 're not suggesting that Jill. . . . It 's fantastic. She 's a nurse, she knows what drugs do to people. Just a slow form of murder instead of the speedy kind. If you 'd set eyes on her, you 'd know . . ."

" But I haven't," said the Inspector slowly. " And suppose, just for the sake of argument, you 're wrong ? Suppose they got hold of her in

some way. . . . Now, Dr. Fyfe, I 'm only trying to answer your question. What can have happened to her, I mean."

" Then perhaps you can answer this one, too. Why should she leave a note telling me she was going to the Angel ? "

" In build-ups like this one there 's always danger for the little man, the little woman, too, of course. I mean, the chaps at the top stay put, but the personnel are always changing, just as soon as they stop being assets and start being a danger—to X, I mean."

" Blackmail ? " Richard felt his head swim.

" Or conversion. Or just blue funk. The authorities don't look kindly on these dope rings, and no one likes the idea of spending years behind bars. Sometimes, particularly with women, they fall in love, want to cut clear, make a fresh start. They can swear till they 're blue in the face that they 've put the past behind them, don't remember a thing, but X and his friends aren't going to take a chance like that, and they 'd be mugs if they did," he added, candidly. " So, you see . . . ? "

" Eric in the dock, Benn in the basement. What 's this leading up to ? Gillian on the bomb-site ? I keep telling you, she knew nothing."

" She knew where Benn hung out, and she 'd told you."

" She didn't tell me," Richard interrupted. " She just said he had a junk shop near the market—and his name. I looked him up in the telephone book."

" And came to see him ? "

" He was the last person I could get hold of who had seen her. I don't count the crowd at the Angel, I didn't know who they were. But if there was anything—wacky—then Benn was probably in it. So I came down, last night, but I couldn't get any answer."

" And you came again to-day ? "

" I had to do something. And he might have been back. When I saw the milk I was pretty sure he was on the premises, and I meant to get some information out of him, if I had to. . . ." He stopped abruptly.

" Break his neck, you were going to say. Dr. Fyfe, when you realised the young lady hadn't come back, why didn't you ring the police ? "

" I didn't want to see her name in capitals in every rag in the kingdom, and find my doorstep cluttered up with Press hounds," returned Richard, savagely. " Besides, you 'd only have told me it 's a free country and if a girl chooses to change her mind about who she 'll go out with, I mean, that 's no concern of yours."

" You don't do us justice," returned the Inspector drily. " Nothing else occur to you ? Then I don't think we need detain you any longer, Dr. Fyfe. You 're not thinking of leaving London for the next few days, I take it ? "

" I 'm a doctor," said Richard, his voice as dry as the Inspector's. " You can't walk out on a crowd of sick people, you know. Anyway, until I 've got some information about Miss Hinde, from you or anyone else . . ."

" If you should get any information about Miss Hinde from any other quarter, I rely on you to pass it on to us at once," said the Inspector in a sharp tone. " And whatever you do, don't try and pull the chestnuts out of the fire yourself. For some reason I 've never been able to fathom, amateurs always get the idea they can outwit the professionals."

It wasn't often that Arthur Crook found himself in agreement with the police, but he 'd have given them an ungrudging hand on that.

" It wouldn't help us to have you hit over the head," the policeman continued. " We 're short-handed as it is . . ."

" And so 's my hospital. Try and get it into your head, Inspector, that I haven't the slightest desire to find myself in the mortuary queue behind Benn and that other chap you found in the water."

The Inspector said politely it was nice they understood each other, but when he found himself alone with his sergeant, he said, " I don't like it ; I don't like it a bit. I don't think this young chap 's implicated, but say he found out the girl was and came hot-foot to see Benn—he was in the neighbourhood last night, he admits it himself, and Benn was killed some time between six and eleven, as far as Burgess can say."

" He came round again to-day," his sergeant reminded him.

" They do it. You know that as well as I do. Some can't stand the suspense. Has he been found ? Am I suspected ? What 's happening ? Some of them even think it 's a smart thing to be the one that finds the body. And he said he was going to telephone us, but when Oliver met him he was coming out of the house and he hadn't tried to ring us—he knew the house was on the 'phone, remember, because he 'd looked it up in the book to get the address. If someone hadn't happened to see him sneaking in the back way, should we have learned about Benn's death as early as we did ? "

" Ever done a jig-saw puzzle ? " Crook enquired cheerfully of his companion. " Ever find a bit that don't seem to fit in anywhere, and say, ' This must belong to something else,' and then you find you 've got the bits in wrong and your mystery piece does fit, after all ? "

He was talking to Richard Fyfe, who had gone round to see him on the evening of the Bank Holiday.

There was still no news about Gillian.

" Who 's your odd bit in this puzzle ? " demanded the young doctor, wishing people wouldn't talk in riddles when your head ached like blazes and you were so sick with anxiety you could scarcely distinguish a migraine from a meningitis.

" The chap who gave the alarm. In the police's shoes, I 'd have wanted to know quite a lot about him. What was he doing in an empty street on Christmas Day ? He didn't live there or he 'd have hung around. Why didn't he stop to meet them ? And why should he care if a perfect stranger, in broad daylight, mark you, or as broad as we ever get it in this country in December, tries to get into a house by the back if he doesn't get in at the front. More." He wagged an enormous pudgy finger at his audience. " How come he was there two days running and could identify your car ? Well ? Want to know the answer ? "

" You tell me," agreed Richard, feeling rather overwhelmed by Crook's boisterous energy.

" My guess 'ud be he was set to watch the house and report in due course. He saw you come down on Christmas Eve—well, obviously, or he wouldn't have known you were there. You didn't get in, so Bob 's your uncle. But the next day you go down and you go for the back way and you don't come out again. Didn't you say the street was a *cul-de-sac* ?"

" Yes," agreed Richard, thinking this was perhaps how patients felt when they found themselves confronted by some medical authority of immense reputation—tongue-tied.

" So "—Crook plodded on, the most pertinacious of elephants—" when you didn't come back he did a bit of arithmetic and guessed you 'd got inside. And he knew what you were going to find there. Well, of course he did. Otherwise, why should he care if you got in or not ? The police are like rats, you know. They hang on. Someone's going to swing one of these days for Benn, just as they will for that chap they pulled out of the dock, and your shadow didn't see why it shouldn't be you."

" Shadow ? " repeated Richard.

" Well," said Crook politely, " you didn't mention you were bringing a friend with you."

" I didn't. I haven't spoken of this to anyone else."

" Just as well," Crook agreed. " It ain't healthy to know too much. If I could persuade chaps of that, the undertakers 'ud have a lot more time on their hands. Now, just drift up alongside and tell me if you 've seen that type on the other side of the street before."

He was leaning casually against the window-frame as he spoke. Richard came over, stood an instant glancing up and down the street and turned away.

" No," he said. " Do you think he 's there because I 'm here ? "

" I don't think, I know. Point is—did the rozzers put him on to you or could it be X ? Didn't notice if he tailed you home from Aldgate Pump ? "

" No. Do you think he could have been the chap who gave the alarm ? He wasn't in evidence after the police arrived."

" Would you be, in the circumstances ? No, no ; depend upon it, he was shut up nice and tight in a telephone booth giving his boss the low-down on developments. Made your will ? "

He shot out the question so suddenly that Richard's eyes bulged. He spun round.

" You don't suppose . . ."

" My dear chap, do be your age and remember you ain't playing a panel game now. Also that the most bloodstained murderer can't hang twice. If these chaps think you 're the slightest danger to them they won't give you time to say your prayers. Take my tip and don't go hanging about dark corners by yourself ; if a chap stops you and asks for a light, ask him what 's wrong with buying himself a box of matches ; and if he wants a lift remind him that Providence equipped him with two feet. And if he should happen to be a one-legged man," he added, " it shows he 's a careless type, anyway, and not to be trusted. Don't keep any appointments without checking up that they 're with the right dick, and, above all, don 't let a stranger stand you a drink."

" In short," suggested Richard, " about the only place where I shall be safe is the churchyard."

Crook looked disgusted. " If you want to play safe I don't know why the hell I 'm wasting my time on you," he said.

Richard hadn't been back long when he received a telephone call.

" Dr. Fyfe ? " said a voice. " Just thought you 'd like to know the little lady's fine, which is how you 'd like her to stay, I guess. Well, then, don't go starting anything, will you ? "

" If you mean the police, you know as well as I do it 's out of my hands." He couldn't really believe he was talking to someone who knew where Gillian was. " Let me speak to her," he exclaimed in sudden fury. " I don't believe you 've got her."

" It 'ud be a shame to deprive her of her beauty sleep," said the voice. " And I don't mean the police. The police . . ." It appeared that the speaker's opinion of them tallied with Crook's. And Crook's was the next name he heard. " Been seeing much of him lately ? " asked the voice. " Got a big nose, hasn't he ? Might drop him a hint it 'ud be healthier to keep it out of matters that don't concern him."

There was a sharp click as the receiver was replaced. Richard's first impulse was to dial 999. Then his hand dropped to his side. He didn't know much about tapping telephone wires, but he didn't believe this gang would leave much to chance. " Mind you tell us of any developments," the Inspector had said. It 's your duty, he 'd meant, but what did he, Richard, care about duty if Gillian was the penalty for being a good citizen ? Let the police catch their own criminals. Wasn't that what they were for ?

He walked over to the window and there was the same fellow hanging about at the corner. He marched down the stairs and across the street.

" Who put you on to watching me ? " he demanded.

The man turned, staring. Richard felt a pang of misgiving. Was this the same man ? He hadn't really seen him properly.

" Watching you ? " said the other. " Why ? If you think I 've got nothing better to do than hang about on your doorstep you should have your head examined."

He threw away the stub of his cigarette, stuck his hands in his pockets and swaggered off. Richard went into the house again and asked the telephone operator if a recent call could be traced. It couldn't, of course, having been made on the automatic exchange. When he put back the instrument Richard stole across and looked out of the window. There

wasn't anyone to be seen; he looked again a little later, but there was still no one there. But when he drew the curtains and turned on the light the watcher came out of his hiding-place and resumed his patient vigil.

In a house whose address she didn't know, Gillian lay on her back and stared at the ceiling.

The little room into which they had now moved her was not much larger than a cell and contained very little more furniture. Each day the woman the men called Lena led her down to the bathroom, and she realised vaguely that this must be quite a large house, her prison being on the top floor. She had never seen her bag again, and though they let her have her powder compact, they withheld the lipstick.

"You 're not going anywhere, you don't need lipstick," Lena chaffed her.

"Are you afraid I 'd write a message on the bathroom wall?" They hadn't broken her spirit yet, though no one could complain they hadn't tried; in that bare little room, so old-fashioned there wasn't even electric light, just a little gas-jet high in the wall and a rusty little iron grate. They didn't give her a fire, only an oil-stove during the day. At night the door was locked on the outside.

Another man had turned up; they called him Pug, and it was he who did the endless questioning.

"Who 's Richard?"

"A friend."

"What 's his real name?"

"Just Richard."

"Where does he live?"

"In London. Where am I now?"

"I 'm asking the questions. Why did you give him Benn's address?"

"I didn't. I couldn't. I don't know it myself."

"Found your way there all right."

"It was an accident. Because of the fog."

Pug laughed. It wasn't a nice sound. "Too bad."

"Why do you keep me here?"

"Why did you muscle in? Now it 's too late."

Too late for what? she wanted to say, but she couldn't speak the words. Sometimes she thought she was really going mad. That was what they wanted her to believe, of course.

There was a tiny window in her room, looking over precisely nothing. All she could tell was that the house was isolated; only a few sounds floated up to her, and no one ever went walking along the waste space that was her view. But once she saw a van going past, and she shouted and screamed and pounded on the glass—she couldn't open the window, it was screwed down. The driver didn't hear her, but the others did. They came bursting in and pulled her away and tied her hands and feet; they put a gag in her mouth and threw her on the bed—they didn't worry about being gentle—and while "Dr. Belvedere" pasted dark paper over the glass, the woman told her what to expect if she tried any more tricks.

"You 've got a pretty face," she said. "It would be a pity to get it spoiled."

She didn't know what day of the week it was, how long she had been here. Two days, three days, a week, a month? Time had stopped like a clock that had run down. At the back of her mind was the realisation that they couldn't keep her here forever, and how would they ever dare let her go, except to a deeper darkness still?

The woman came in, carrying a tray. "Ready for your dinner?" she said. She brought a box of matches with her, and she lighted the gas-jet. "Eat it up and then I 'll give you some news."

Gillian looked at her, perplexed. Her fair, pretty hair was lank and uncombed, her face shadowed—she seemed quite old when she saw herself in the glass.

"What day is it?"

"What does that matter to you?"

"How long have I been here?"

"Not long enough to learn sense, it seems. What a silly girl you are, Gillian Hinde. Living in the dark like a troglodyte. Now eat up and you shall see a newspaper."

Panic flared up in her. "What 's happened to him?"

"Happened to who?" Lena's face was cunning.

"Richard." The word was a breath of sound.

"Dr. Fyfe? Oh, yes, we know who he is; so do the police."

"The police?" She was falling back into her silly habit of repeating the last words she 'd heard.

"That 's right. Eat your dinner and I 'll tell you."

Gillian gulped down the unpalatable food. She ached with cold and hunger and the pummelling she 'd so recently received.

"That 's better. Now—that column. That 's right."

Poor Mr. Benn hadn't attracted much attention in life, and in death he didn't rate more than a few lines in a side column.

> Police are investigating the death of a marine-store dealer known as Hassan Benn, believed to be of Arab descent, who was found with his neck broken at the foot of a flight of stone stairs behind his shop on Christmas Day. This is the second mysterious death in this area during the past month, the other being that of Eric Boxer, whose body was taken out of the St. Julian Dock less than two weeks ago.

Gillian laid the paper aside. "It doesn't say a word about Richard."

"Ah, but he was there. It so happens a friend of ours was passing and he saw a young man breaking into the house by the back, so he rang the police, and when they came your Dr. Fyfe was beside the body. Now do you understand? You told him where to go and he went and he lost his temper and pushed the old man downstairs. That 's murder, Gillian Hinde, and murderers hang. We 're doing you a favour really, keeping you hidden, because there 's something called accessory before the fact. . . ."

Gillian got up, her eyes wild. "It 's all lies. Richard . . ."

"Why don't you ask him yourself?" insinuated the voice. "You could get him on the telephone."

She closed her lips tight. You could be a coward and shiver in the dark, wondering what your tormentors' next step would be, but, even so, you wouldn't betray your dear love.

"Shall I get his number. It 's Pleasance 1948, isn't it? He must be quite anxious about you. Such strange things happen to girls who go where they 're not invited, especially after dark."

Gillian leaned against the blacked-out window; it was another trick, of course. The trouble was that, sooner or later, they 'd catch you off your guard and you 'd say the fatal word. . . . Her head swam; what *was* the fatal word? She didn't even know the answer to her own question.

"Come," said the woman, putting an authoritative arm round her shoulders, "lean on me and we 'll go downstairs. The telephone 's downstairs. What? You won't come? Very well, if you won't talk to him, I will. I 'll leave your door open so you can hear. I 'm afraid you don't trust us very far, do you?"

She walked out of the room and down the stairs; light came in from the landing. Gillian stole out and leaned over the bannisters. There was the sound of a telephone dial being spun. She held her breath. Then the woman's voice came pealing up the staircase.

"Dr. Fyfe? That is Dr. Fyfe speaking? Hold the line, please. Miss Hinde would like a word with you."

Richard's voice came quite clearly over the line, though she couldn't hear the words.

"Yes, she 's just coming. Gillian!"

She was there, staggering, shaking, her hand outstretched to take the receiver. But it was jerked out of her reach. The man called Pug was there; she didn't know where he 'd come from.

"Just remember we can hear everything you say," he warned her, "so don't talk out of line. What you 're to tell the boy-friend is, first, not to get on to the police about this call, or it 'll be the worse for you, and next, that if he 's patient and plays along he can come and see you. If he doesn't play, there 'll be danger all round. Got that?"

She nodded. He put the receiver into her hand. "Now, no tricks, mind," he said.

"Gillian!" Richard was clamouring at the other end of the line. "Is it you? I can't believe it . . ."

"Darling. Oh, Richard . . ." Her voice failed.

On his side, too, there was a moment of incredulous silence. Then: "Where are you?"

"I don't know." Lowering her eyes she saw a number written on the instrument. "That is . . ."

Something touched her side and she glanced down. The man on the other end of the line heard the long, swift breath she drew.

"Gillie, what is it? What are they doing to you? Gillie!"

She was still staring at the knife. Even now it didn't seem possible it might be driven into your ribs while you stood beside a table, a telephone in your hand. But an inward voice told her not to be silly. Say one word off the record and the knife would move.

"I still can't believe this is us. Richard, I 've got a message. Listen carefully. *Don 't*—repeat, don 't—try and get in touch with the police about this. Come and see me when you get the chance—did you get that? If you don't do what I say, you 'll be in great danger—no, I 'm not being melodramatic, it 's true." Her voice jerked unevenly up and down, giving an odd emphasis to this word and that.

"Gillie, how are they treating you?"

"I 'm all right. Richard, don't do anything rash— Darling, I love you. Never forget. I love you, love you . . ."

The receiver was abruptly twisted out of her hand. "Get that, Dr. Fyfe? If you know what 's good for Miss Hinde you 'll do like she says. Hang around and I 'll ring you again presently and name a rendezvous. And if you 're wise you 'll come fast."

"Make it now," His words sounded as though they 'd been dragged over emery-paper.

"What do you take me for? I 'll ring when I 'm sure you 're not double-crossing me. And don't think we shouldn't know. Of course, if you think it 's your duty to get on to that Inspector . . . How good a citizen are you, Doctor?"

A laugh accompanied the last words.

Richard's voice came through again. "When will you ring?"

"Oh, maybe this afternoon, maybe in an hour. You stand by." He hung up the receiver and turned, grinning, to the shaken girl.

"Don't do anything rash," he gibed. "But he 'll come, sweetheart; he 'll come. You see, we shall make him understand what might happen to you if he didn't. But I don't think I 'll ask you to be present when we ring him next time. To tell you the truth, you cramp my style. Those big, sad eyes of yours—I shall burst out crying soon, really I shall."

When he 'd rung off, Richard began walking up and down the room like a man practising for a marathon. Up and down, over and across, up and down. . . His landlady, Mrs. Lloyd, who occupied the room below, stood it as long as she could and then, when even banging on the ceiling with the handle of a broom made no difference, she decided to come up and find out for herself what was wrong.

Richard hadn't even heard the thumping of the stick. He seemed enmeshed in a nightmare, where your dear love could speak to you and you not have an idea where she was or who were her companions. Her voice, he thought—that had been strange, staccato—perhaps they were using force. He began to repeat her words—Don't tell the police—come and see me—great danger . . . Light flashed into his darkened mind. Of course, she was using the words as a kind of code. Don't come—great danger—that was what she meant. But danger for whom?

For her? Him? For them both, of course, since you couldn't separate them now. Up and down, up and . . . He was aware of someone banging on the door and when he opened it, there stood Mrs. Lloyd.

"Really, Dr. Fyfe," she said "if I'd wanted to live in the Lion House I'd have applied for a basement flat in the Zoo."

He stared, not taking anything in, except that she was there and seemed put out about something. She saw that *distrait* look and her manner changed. She could recognise trouble, and young Dr. Fyfe was one of her favourites. A polite, pleasant young man, not given to knocking the furniture about.

"What is it? Something's wrong. Have you had bad news?"

He was thinking fast now. He'd been brooding—what next? Ring the police? Too dangerous. They might have his line tapped; similarly, he shrank from telephoning to Artbur Crook. It wouldn't help anyone for him to wake up in hospital and a gang that didn't draw the line at pitching an old man downstairs and abducting a girl, wouldn't make a thing about hitting Crook over the head. And even Crook, though you'd never get him to say so, was only mortal. But here was a straw at which to grasp, though plump Mrs. Lloyd wouldn't have suggested a straw to most people.

In reply to her question, he said: "Yes. Bad news. That is—I'm waiting for a telephone call. Mrs. Lloyd, you're right. I am in trouble. I need a friend. I know I can trust you. . . ."

Her heart warmed to him; he was like the son she'd never had.

"What is it, then?" she asked, her voice softening. "If I can help . . ."

"I can't tell you," he said jerkily, "but—if I got in a jam would you ring this number?"

He hauled Crook's card out of his pocket.

"My lawyer," he added quickly. Then he tried to laugh. "I may be riding ahead of the hounds, but—just in case. You understand?"

She understood this was Trouble with a capital T, but she took the card, saying: "I'll do that, Dr. Fyfe. Lawyer?" She glanced down. "That's a funny name for a lawyer to have."

"He's a funny sort of lawyer," said Richard. And then the telephone rang and he went quickly back to the room.

But it was only a wrong number. He hung up and looked out of the window. The watchdog was still there. Oh, well—Patience be our watchword, as the old hymn said. He started to prowl again, then remembered Mrs. Lloyd and flung himself down by the telephone. His hands were shaking—like an old drunk, he thought. He picked up a pencil and began to doodle—a cat, the only animal he could draw really, seen in profile, sharp nose, long whiskers, a bow round its neck, and its tail curled neatly round its feet. He hesitated, then added a bell to the bow. He listened; nothing happened; it might be a dead world. It was a Sunday and his off-duty day; everyone seemed asleep or queueing for the pictures. There wasn't much else to do in London on a Sunday. He took up the pencil again and drew a tree and a bird in the tree. What would psychologists make of that? An instinctive expression of danger? But, again—to whom? To the bird? It was safe so long as it stayed in the tree, or until the cat started to climb. Well, if he was the bird, he was going to fly out of the tree the minute he saw the green light.

He looked out of the window once more. Was his shadow still there? You bet. And then he stiffened, rigid, eyes widening. Because he saw the car coming down the street, tbe long black car with the radio rod and the man in uniform at the wbeel. You can't mistake a police car. Still, it had a right to come down the road, hadn't it? Nothing to show it was coming here. It 'ud go right past. . . . The car slowed and stopped at the gate. A man got out, plain-clothes, but that's what you'd expect. He pushed open the gate and walked up the path.

When the knock fell on his door Richard was doodling again.

"Come in! Yes, Mrs. Lloyd?" Had he got the right note of surprise in his voice? And then he saw that didn't matter, saw she was remembering their conversation and thought this was what he meant. Trouble with the police! He didn't know how to correct that impression; assure her it wasn't the police he feared. . . .

The plain-clothes man had come up behind her. It wasn't the Inspector, which proved it wasn't just a casual visit to verify a detail or put a couple of additional questions. Anyway, for that they wouldn't come in a car. Mrs. Lloyd came into the room, her hands clasped in front of her; he saw the broad gold wedding-ring she wore. . .

"Oh, Dr. Fyfe, someone from the police—he would come up."

"May I come in?"

Richard smiled faintly. "Can I prevent you?"

"We can't come into a private house without heing invited. You should know your rights, Dr. Fyfe. Not unless we have a warrant, that is."

"And you haven't? Come in, of course. It's all right, Mrs. Lloyd, I'm assisting the police about an inquest. That's so, isn't it?" he added, as the woman slowly retreated.

"That's so, Sir. The Inspector 'ud be glad if you could come along to the station. . . ." The newcomer drew off his gloves and stood there, calm and immovable. The sun came out suddenly, just as though there was something to be triumphant about. It caught the chromium fittings of a great blue and silver car going past the window, driven hy a girl who looked as though she'd walked straight out of Hollywood, shone on a bit of glass held over his head hy a small hoy, caught the light on a broad, handsome ring, on the plump side of a china jug on his own mantelshelf.

"Well, not right away, I'm afraid," said Richard pleasantly. "I'm expecting a telephone call. I'll be along later."

"I'm sorry, Sir. About your call, I mean . . ."

"Look here," exploded Richard, "what are you afraid of? That I shall make a bolt for it? I wouldn't have a hope in hell, not with your watchdog on the corner there?"

"Our what?" The man's voice rose, startled.

"Oh, come, that's enough of play-acting. You mustn't think I'm a fool all along the line. I promise you, as soon as my call comes through. . . ." Airily he picked up the pencil and doodled a bit more. Keep your head, keep calm. He wasn't as good at drawing dogs as cats; this might have passed for a pig at a pinch. His companion crossed to the window.

"I can assure you we haven't had you followed. Why should we?" He turned, his voice suspicious. "What does this mean, Dr. Fyfe? There's no one there."

"Well, there was when you arrived." He rose in his turn and came to the window; the street was empty of everything except the big black car—a *Panther*, trust the police to have the best—and the driver sitting immovable at the wheel. "No," he agreed, gently, "he's gone now. And do you know where? I'd be prepared to bet he's in the nearest telephone box, informing his hoss of your arrival. Why on earth did you have to come this afternoon? Couldn't you have telephoned?"

"This is a case of murder, Dr. Fyfe. We're concerned . . ."

"I'm concerned it shan't he another murder." He heard his voice rise, clenched his hands and went hack to his chair. "If you're interested, I'm not particularly concerned with who killed that poor devil, Benn. That's for the police to discover." His pencil moved wildly over the paper. If you're sketching, no one can notice how unsteady your hand is. And Gillian was depending on him, having no one else. He drew a car and a driver, as if nothing else in the world really mattered.

"Quite so, Dr. Fyfe. The police are your best friends, if only you'd recognise it. And they're far more likely to find Miss Hinde than any amateur."

He smothered a savage laugh. "Is that so?"

"If you're holding out on us . . ."

He threw down the pencil and got up. "All right," he said, "all right. Let's go." He caught sight of the man's face. "Is there something fresh? Good Heavens, you don't mean—Miss Hinde?"

"I can't say anything, Dr. Fyfe, but if you're really concerned for the young lady you'll come with me without any more delay."

Mrs. Lloyd was waiting in the hall and saw them come down; she caught Richard's eye.

"If you should hear my telephone, Mrs. Lloyd, I'd be awfully obliged if you'd take the call. I'm expecting some important news. You needn't say where I am—just that I've been called out. I don't expect to be long."

"Don't you, indeed?" reflected Mrs. Lloyd, watching the black car drive away. She knew a good deal about the police, and in her experience they always meant trouble. She wondered about the card in her pocket. And that bit about the telephone call—was that genuine or meant to be a hint? She did a bit of prowling herself, before she made up her mind, and took the receiver off Richard's telephone. But when she rang the Bloomsbury number there was no reply. It was quite a while before she noticed the second number on the card—what Crook called his emergency number, and tried that.

And this time she was more fortunate.

The hlack car rolled smoothly through the streets; there wasn't much traffic and what there was made way for the police.

"Step on it, Fred," said Richard's companion. "Dr. Fyfe can't wait to meet his young lady. Isn't that so, Dr. Fyfe?"

He stuffed his gloves into the pocket of his overcoat. The sun came through the window and shone on a handsome ring he was wearing. Crook's voice sounded in Richard's ear. "As smooth a Charley as ever I saw," he said. "Wearing a sizeable ring, too. Funny, I never could take to chaps who wear rings."

And, of course, policemen don't wear rings, not when they're on duty.

"Cat got your tongue?" The man beside him laughed.

"I was thinking," said Richard, "that Chesterton was right. You don't look for a hamadryad in a sideboard. And, of course, when you see a police car and a man in uniform, you expect it to be the police."

"That was the idea."

"It's a very good imitation." His eyes were watching the road; in a minute they'd be held up by lights. There were a few people going up and down the pavement . . .

"You can thank Fred for that. Fred wore a police uniform once, hut—the life didn't offer enough scope, did it, Fred? Dr. Fyfe," his voice changed, "you weren't thinking of trying anything, were you? If so, I wouldn't advise it, really I wouldn't. You see, we're on a time schedule. If we don't make our destination the time I told them, I've left instructions—what's to happen to Miss Hinde, I mean."

You might have guessed—they thought of everything. The car stopped as the lights turned red, but Richard made no move. Then they flashed amber, then green; the big car ran onward. They were travelling north, past Hampstead, Highgate—now they'd turned into quite a countrified road, considering you weren't so very far from Piccadilly Circus, that is. The car stopped in front of a fair-sized house with big double gates, Fred got down to open them and they moved up the drive.

Then Fred had opened the door of the car and Charley (if that was his name) told Richard to get out. The door of the house was opened by a nice-looking woman, not unlike Ma Lloyd really, except that she was a lot better dressed and spoke rather differently. Freshly-waved hair, well-kept hands, manner almost cosy.

"We're waiting for you," she said, reminding Richard of the way nurses on a private case sometimes greet a doctor. "We're getting quite impatient."

A man standing at the head of the staircase called. "Got the Doctor there? Bring him up."

Richard stood defiantly, looking around him. Someone—it was Charley—jabbed him in the back, with something hard and small and round. The sense of nightmare was intensified, and for a moment he was

back to a dark house, looking at something that resembled an old sack lying at the foot of a stone staircase.

"Get moving," said Charley, all the smoothness gone from his voice. He went up, Pug going ahead. They passed a number of closed doors; there wasn't a sound to be heard from behind any of them. At the top, the attic floor, Pug flung open what looked like a cupboard; anyway, it was quite dark inside.

"In here," he said.

"Where 's Gillian?" Richard demanded.

"You 'll find out. Go on, get in."

He knew then what he was going to find. "You 'd like to see Miss Hinde, wouldn't you?" they 'd jeered. And, like a fool, it hadn't occurred to him there was no promise he was going to see her alive. He swung round in a wild rage and struck out at the man behind him. Pug plunged forward and caught his arms.

"That 'll do. You 've given us enough trouble as it is."

He felt a foot in the small of his back and staggered forward, crashing into the dark. Behind him someone laughed.

"Give him a box of matches," said Pug. "They may come in useful. Sorry there 's no light," he added. "But you know what these old-fashioned houses are."

Then the door slammed, he heard a key turn in the lock, and a mutter of voices, and again someone laughed. This time it was the woman.

The only difference Sunday made to Crook was that, instead of working in Bloomsbury, he worked in Earls Court. He was hard at it when Mrs. Lloyd got through on the telephone.

"Crook here. Who 's speaking? Who? Dr. Fyfe? An inquest? Didn't say whose, I suppose? Well, well, there 's one born every minute as they say."

Something that had been perplexing Mrs. Lloyd fell into place. Helping about an inquest, Richard had said, and at the time she 'd thought it queer. Now she knew why. Coroners don't hold inquests on Sundays.

"It was a police car," she exclaimed, defensively.

"That 's what you think. Chap didn't happen to say what station he 'd come from? No, I didn't suppose he had. Lucky for the Doctor, if you ask me, if the inquest doesn't turn out to be his own. Now, now, this is no time for waterworks. Be at home if I drop around? O.K."

He depressed the bar of the telephone and dialled a number. Whatever some of his legal colleagues might think of his methods, he had the supreme virtue, from a client's point of view, of having a friend at every court, even the police court. And so it didn't take him long to learn that no police car had been sent out that afternoon to fetch Richard Fyfe in.

"Don't know what they teach 'em at these posh schools," grumbled Crook, ringing up Bill Parsons to let him know how the land lay. "If they wanted him down at the station they wouldn't send a car, not unless he 's lost the use of his legs and then it 'ud be an ambulance. Amateurs!"

He made a snorting sound and rushed down the stairs to where the "Superb" was parked round a corner. Mrs. Lloyd had a second shock when she saw him. She cherished the quaint idea that there 's something—well—refined—about the legal profession. Anyway, lawyers shouldn't go round looking like bookies' touts. She began to babble something.

"Keep it for your memoirs," urged Crook, pushing past her. "Now, then, happen to notice what this chap looked like?"

"Just like anyone else," she said, feebly, "Oh, dear! It 's a pity Dr. Fyfe didn't draw a picture of him instead of the car."

"What 's that?" Crook's big brown eyes bulged out of their sockets. "Drew a car?"

"You know how people do, when they 're thinking or waiting for someone to come to the 'phone. It was a cat to start with."

"The car?" asked Crook politely, reflecting that where patience was concerned he could beat Job on his own ground.

"Ever so good it was. I mean, you could see at once it was a cat."

"Could you see the other was a car?"

"Oh, yes. Man at the wheel and all."

He coaxed her up the stairs to Richard's room and stood staring at the cat and the dicky-bird and something that, he allowed, might be a dog and something else that quite clearly was a car.

He turned to Mrs. Lloyd as he took the receiver from its rest.

"It could be I got the labels mixed," he told her. "Maybe the dumbcluck this time isn't Dr. Richard Fyfe but a guy called Arthur Crook. Anyway, here 's hoping."

Then he got his connection and started talking as rapidly as the waters come down at Lodore. Mrs. Lloyd stood listening and not understanding a word, except that the man she 'd taken for a bookie was laying down the law—and how! as Crook himself would have said. When at last he hung up he turned with a smile as endearing as a baby alligator's.

"O.K. by you if I hang around for a while?" he asked. "I 'm expecting a car, and this time it 'll be the real McCoy."

As Richard pulled himself painfully to his feet a voice he 'd never expected to hear again whispered out of the dark. "Richard! Darling, why did you come? I warned you—I warned you——"

"Gillie!" His heart almost stopped beating with excitement. "Where are you? Wait a minute—I 've got a torch somewhere."

He pressed the button and a ribbon of light played over the walls of their mutual prison, the prison destined to be their tomb.

"I 'm all right. It 's just—I can't move."

He saw why, saw the cords round ankles and wrists and plunged forward.

"What have they done to you? My God, I 'll have them all strung up for this!"

This was so like the impetuous Richard she loved that she even contrived a laugh. Even death didn't seem so bad with Richard beside her, and she was pretty sure death was their invisible playmate here. Now he was on his knees beside her, tearing at the knots; but it was only when he remembered the penknife in his pocket that he was able to set her free. Funny, he thought, they should have left the knife. It must mean that they were very sure . . .

"What 's that?" he asked, throwing up his head.

Feet were moving across the little landing, going quietly down the stairs.

"Enjoy yourselves, turtle doves!" called a mocking voice. "Make the most of your time together. It won't be long now."

Richard played the beam over the enclosing walls. It was clear that this place had been designed for a box room, a luggage-dump; the walls sloped sharply to meet the floor not 12 ft. away; there was no window, no skylight. You couldn't even get much impetus to smash down the door, since there was so little space in which a tall man could stand upright. Still, he thudded and crashed, and the voice, sounding a little farther off now, warned him, "Waste of energy, I assure you. Even if you broke the lock you 'll never get past the bolts. Take my tip—take it easy. Remember, the sooner it 's over, the sooner to sleep, and you 've a nice long sleep ahead."

"What do you suppose they mean to do?" whispered Gillian. "Leave us here—to starve?"

"They won't need to do that. There can't be much air here at the best of times, and now they 've blocked the door—I dare say they 've put a rug over the crack—yes, I thought as much. We shall be suffocated if we don't get out before long."

"How long?"

"Hard to say. Of course, they may have some other idea in mind."

And, of course, they had.

It was Richard who first noticed the change in the atmosphere; he lifted his head, he sniffed, then he said gently, "Here we go. Gas—seeping in from somewhere."

He flashed his torch again round the walls; but there was no bracket here, no fireplace . . .

"It 's all gas on this floor," explained Gillian. "Mrs. Harton told me."

"Easy as kiss your hand. Make a little hole in the wall, attach a bit of rubber tubing to the nearest gas-jet, turn on the tap—that 's what that chap was doing in the room next door—and you can't lose. Or can you? Gillie, we 're not going to die here like a couple of rats or rabbits! First thing, let 's find out where it 's coming from."

A faint hiss guided them to the leak, which was high up in the wall.

"They think of everything, don't they?" said Richard. "There 's a bit of piping there—look. Wonder how firm it is."

"You mean, try and knock it out? But that wouldn't help."

"I was wondering if it was firm enough to hold on to. Gillie, *repeat*, we 're not going to wait here and be gassed like rats in a hole."

"That 's why they gave us the matches!" exclaimed Gillian. "They hoped we should strike one . . ."

"And blow the place sky-high? You can't say they aren't tricrs. Gillie, how are you feeling? Do you think if I made a back, you could climb up and stand on my shoulders? You might be able to get a grip on that pipe—thank goodness it 's near the corner, so you can get some support from the walls—if we can plug it—a handkerchief would do the trick. And you could wedge it with my propelling pencil. We 've got to stop that gas somehow. It 's our only chance. Gillie, are you game? Darling!"

He felt it was a shocking thing to ask of her, with her bruised ankles and wrists, and he was preparing arguments and endearments to persuade her, when she surprised him by saying, "Yes, Richard, if you say so."

"Darling, what a wife you 're going to be. Look, make up your mind, this isn't the end. I believe in miracles . . ."

Ah, but his miracle's name was Crook, and how could he be sure that Mrs. Lloyd had got in touch? At the time he 'd wanted to warn her this wasn't the sort of occasion he 'd meant, until he saw the chap's ring, that is. Oh, yes, he 'd known he was walking into a trap before ever he left the house, but he 'd do the same again, even if he knew this prison was the end of it. There 'd been no other way of finding Gillian . . .

He stooped and made a back, and she climbed up. It was going to be tricky, of course. If she lost her balance in the dark it might be the end for them both. Slowly he straightened up.

"Put your feet in my hands. It 's all right, you don't weigh more than a good-sized cat. Now, one foot on my shoulder—lean against the wall . . ."

It didn't seem possible that she could do it, but she did. Swaying, sick, half-choked by the gas and the darkness and the bad air, she nevertheless reached down for the handkerchief he passed to her—a second clean one was tied round her mouth—and now he released one hand—the other held her firmly round the ankle—and the beam of the torch swung, wavered and lighted on the treacherous bit of pipe.

"Put your head down, darling. That 's it. Stuff the handkerchief as far up the pipe as you can."

She wondered dizzily—what will happen? Won't the pipe explode? But Richard was there, and everything must be all right now.

Suddenly she felt herself begin to crumble. "Richard, hold me——I——"

"O.K., sweetheart. I 've got you." The torch went back in his pocket; now he had her by both ankles. "Stoop—give me your hands . . ."

She was coughing helplessly when at last he got her down and held her close in his arms.

" It wasn't any use," she whispered. " And gas would have been quicker."

" Come and lie down by the door. A little air may seep under the rug. They won't think we could plug that pipe."

She lay in his arms, shivering as if she 'd never stop, while he comforted her. He didn't say much; they needed all the air there was. But—" I believe in miracles," he repeated.

Only—the miracle would have to come pretty soon if it was to save them.

Charley was making a nice job of re-spraying the *Panther* a tasteful claret-colour, while Fred removed the number-plates—when Mrs. Harton, sitting in the bow-window of the dining-room, saw the first of the police cars come hurrying up the drive.

" Pbilip ! " She turned her head and Pug Mayhew came in. When he saw the car, he said, " Stall 'em, Lena," and tore out to the garage.

" How 's she coming ? Get away from here. It 's the rozzers."

Charley didn't believe him at first. " You 're kidding."

" Look out of the window and see if I 'm kidding. Lock the door and, . . ." He didn't stop to finish; he 'd be wanted in the house.

Lena hadn't turned a hair; she was the toughest of them all.

" They 're here somewhere," said Crook. " Upstairs or downstairs or—no, sugar, they won't be in any room with the door open. Ah, what did I tell you ? "

Panting like a grampus he had reached the foot of the last flight of stairs. " See that rug shoved against a door. That 's our bit of trouble." He shoved his big, red head over the bannisters : " What the blazes do you chaps think you are ? The Big Four ? Send some of your thugs up to smash a door. Better bring a hatchet—Black Beauty 'ull tell you where it is, and if he don't remember, just drop a weight on his feet till he does. That always fetches 'em. And mind," he added, " if you lose either of these I 'll charge the lot of you with manslaughter and see the jury brings in a true bill at tbat."

" It was quite a party," admitted Crook a while later. He was talking to the newly-rescued pair who, while not looking their best, certainly weren't candidates for the mortuary as Pug Mayhew had intended. " Once I saw the Doctor had had the wit to put the number of the car on that sketch he made—right under Smart Charley's nose—the wheels went round faster than the ' Old Superb,' and that 's saying something. The police put out a general call for a black *Panther*, No. XXX 1278, and they cbecked the registration. It appears that should have been the number of a *Mortimer* 8 belonging to a fellow called Smith, but Smith's car, which

" Now, one foot on my shoulder—lean against the wall. . . . ."

" Philip," she said, " the police are asking about a Dr. Fyfe. I 've told them he doesn't live here . . ."

" Come to the wrong address," grinned Pug.

" And a Miss—what was the name ?—Hinde ? "

" Try The Gables down the Avenue. I believe I have heard the name . . ."

" I believe you have a *Panther*, No. ABV 190," the policeman continued, turning to Lena.

" I 'm afraid she 's up for repairs at the moment."

There was a commotion in the drive and an apparition whirled in who might have been a clown on his day off.

" Such as re-painting ? " said Mr. Crook, his hat over one eye and a startled and utterly bewildered Mrs. Lloyd held by one hand. He came forward. " What 's that on your coat ? Red paint ? Careless, very. Come on, sugar. You and me ain't nationalised yet. Leave the red tape to the Civil Service."

He thrust past Mayhew, who made a sharp move to stop him. Crook stuck out a foot as hard as the Rock of Gibraltar and Pug came down with a crash. Crook went storming up the stairs, and Mrs. Lloyd scuttled after him.

was in his garage, had got a new number—ABV 190. It 's an old gag, of course, swapping number-plates, and they must have thought it pretty safe. Who ever notices the number of a police car ? You 'd tumbled to him by then, I take it ? " he added to Richard.

Richard nodded. " The ring gave him away. It 's tbe little things . . ."

" O.K., buddy. Let 's skip the lecture. Well, ABV 190 was the registration number of a black *Panther* belonging to a Mrs. Harton, address as you 'd expect. Mrs. Lloyd recognised Charley when they pulled him out of the garage and the police found his finger-prints in your room. It never pays to under-rate the other side," wound up Crook, blissfully arrogant. " ' Twasn't as though you hadn't told them I was in on tbis. Still, we 're all good citizens and like to give the police a hand when we can, don't we ? "

He got up and held out a huge hand to Gillian. " Still a bit peaky," he suggested. " Know what I 'd suggest—speaking as a layman, of course ? A bit of medical attention. And the Doctor here," he gave Richard a nudge that nearly broke a rib, " is just the chap to give it you."

And humming gaily, " She 's the girl for me," he came rushing down and was reunited to the " Old Superb."

THE END

The solution to the Crossword Puzzle included in the James Buchanan advertisement on the back page of our cover.

Across

1. Black and White.
10. Earning.
11. Masonic.
12. Lilt.
13. Blend.
15. Best.
17. Sad.
19. Whisky.
21. Posset.
22. Aeolian.
23. Latest.
25. Tinder.
27. Pen.
29. V.I.P's.
30. Sarum.
31. Anti.
34. Utopian.
35. Merrier.
36. Welcome guests.

Down

2. Lorelei.
3. Chin.
4. Angels.
5. Demand.
6. Host.
7. Tanners.
8. Mellow flavour.
9. Scots terriers.
14. Earlier.
16. Ukase.
18. Tonic.
20. Yet.
21. Pat.
24. Tophole.
26. Dentist.
27. Paynim.
28. Nutmeg.
32. Disc.
33. Free.

FAIRY-TALE CREATURES BELOVED BY CHILDREN OF MANY GENERATIONS AND MANY LANDS: BIRDS, BEASTS, AN INSECT AND GIRLS FROM FAMOUS STORIES BY HANS ANDERSEN.

The fairy-stories of the Danish genius Hans Christian Andersen contain many animal and bird characters. Not only do creatures of fantasy appear, such as the terrifying dogs waiting to be summoned by striking the Tinder Box (pictured at the top of the page), but many that are well observed and true to life. Among those illustrated are Storks, which, breeding in Denmark, were familiar to Andersen. They appear in many stories, including "The Marsh King's Daughter" and "The Story of the Year." The melancholy cry of the Seagull expresses the penitence of the transformed "Girl Who Trod on the Loaf"; the Raven, sombre and sardonic, appears in "The Story of the Year," and the Nightingale belongs to the twilight tale of the same name, in which its song charms Death from the bedside of the Chinese Emperor. Swallows have a place in Hans Andersen's tales; and Sparrows. Beside the lakeside Elisa greets her eleven Brothers, now spell-bound as Wild Swans. Also beside the water is the Portuguese Duck from "The Duck Pen," and, of course, "The Ugly Duckling" and his foster brothers and sisters are present. The four much-travelled Mice from "Soup from a Sausage Skewer" recount their adventures, while another voyager, the Beetle who went on his travels, is seen setting out. The downfall of the boastful weathercock, brought about by the wind in "The Farmyard Cock and the Weathercock," is recalled by the Cock; and the bossy Fieldmouse is shown with "Thumbelisa."

Drawn by our Special Artist, Neave Parker.

FAIRY-TALE CREATURES BELOVED BY CHILDREN OF MANY GENERATIONS AND MANY LANDS: BIRDS, BEASTS, IRON HANS AND A GIRL FROM FAMOUS STORIES BY THE BROTHERS GRIMM.

The fairy-tales by the Brothers Grimm retain the simplicity of style of old folk tales and, at times, have a sombre Gothic atmosphere, consistent with a setting in the Black Forest or the Harz Mountains, yet they are well loved. The Grimm animals illustrated, include "The Seven Ravens"—bewitched princelings—flying towards the glass mountain, and the White Dove bearing a golden key, from "The Old Woman in the Wood." The Bear who enlists the aid of the Bee to rid his cave of the unwelcome Goat, and the Gold-Ass showering coins on a cloth, are featured in "The Wishing Table, the Gold-Ass and the Cudgel"; and the Eagle dives on the Phœnix in the climax of "The Crystal Ball." "Iron Hans," a bearded figure, stands by the Gift-Horses, and the procession of Geese advancing to the pool belong to "The Goose Girl"; while the Cat Princess and her attendants descending the rock are from "The Poor Miller's Boy and the Cat." The Fawn with the gold collar is the transformed Brother who drank from the magic brook in "Brother and Sister"; and the Cock, Hens and Speckled Cow are the bewitched servants of the Prince in "The Hut in the Forest." In Grimm's "Cinderella" the Fairy Godmother is a White Bird. "The Golden Goose" and "The Frog Prince" are familiar; the White Duck is a bewitched maiden from "The White Bride and the Black Bride"; and the Lambkin and the Little Fish are two more spell-bound children.

Drawn by our Special Artist, Neave Parker.

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NAVY CUT

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OF COVENT GARDEN
THE COMPLETE MAN'S STORE

Junction of Garrick & Bedford Streets, W.C.2
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WHAT THE ★★★ FORETELL . . .

You will go on a journey - - -!

For you Madam three stars in the constellation Courvoisier foretell a journey, a pleasant surprise and a personal triumph.

You will make the journey to the wine merchants and order Courvoisier Cognac: Three Star for the long drink, V.S.O.P. for the liqueur. You will be surprised that Cognac Brandy of such quality is so modest in price and then . . .

That evening a man will look at you over his glass, a long, warm, reflective look; he is thinking ". . . how right she is . . . how clever of her to know." Madam you now have the lead in dummy.

As for you Sir, you have Courvoisier in your glass and, if you were not born yesterday, you may now be discreetly outrageous.

COURVOISIER
COGNAC
The Brandy of Napoleon
★★★ and V.S.O.P.

Have the Gay **Gordon's** for Christmas

Here they are, the superbly blended Gordon gins and cocktails. Each is perfect in its own individual way. This Christmas make it Gordon's* for gaiety!

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No Christmas is complete without it. Gordon's Gin has a most favourable influence on tonic water, fruit squash, vermouth. Bottle 33/9d.; ½ bottle 17/7d.; ¼ bottle 9/2d.; Miniature 3/7d.

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Each one mixed by experts and ready to serve. Ensures success of any party. PICCADILLY — DRY MARTINI — MARTINI — BRONX — PERFECT — FIFTY-FIFTY. Bottle 21/-; ½ bottle 11/3d.; Miniature 2/5d.

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Not to be confused with gin and orange squash, these Gordon favourites are made in the traditional way with Gordon's Dry Gin, real oranges and lemons, and pure cane sugar. Best taken neat as a liqueur, but also most refreshing with Soda Water or Tonic Water if preferred. Bot. 32/- · ½ Bot. 16/9 Miniature 3/5d.

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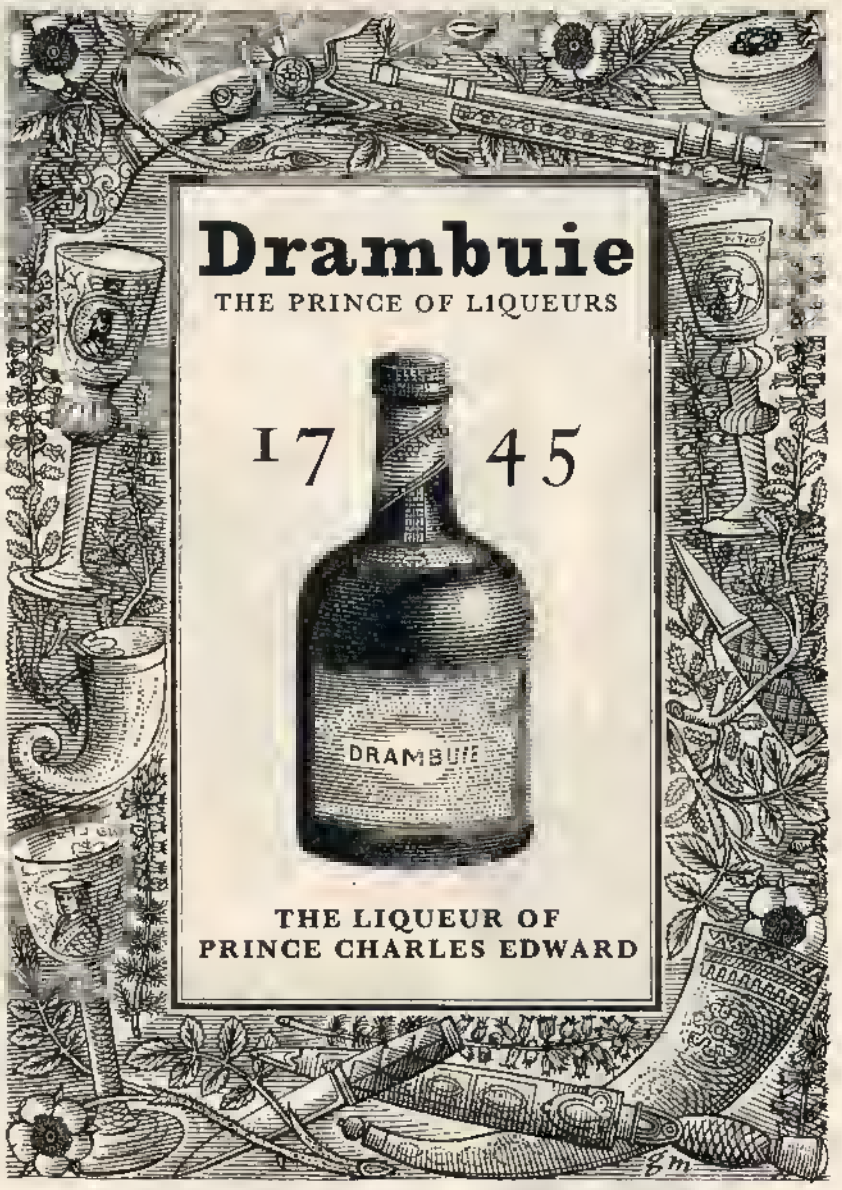
HAVE THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS HAVE THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS HAVE THE GAY GORDONS FOR CHRISTMAS

Maintenant c'est au
NOW IS THE
tour de Dubonnet
TIME FOR DUBONNET
de rentrer dans
TO COME TO THE AID OF
la danse.
THE PARTY.
(Comme d'habitude !)
AS USUAL!

Parties go with an extra swing when Duhonnet is among those present. One of the joys of this enlivening drink is that it does not affect the liver. Another is that it mixes well with gin and is equally delicious neat or with soda. Get a bottle of Dubonnet (20/-) to help you plan your next party.

DUBONNET DOES NOT AFFECT THE LIVER

SOLE DISTRIBUTORS: L. ROSE & CO. LTD., ST. ALBANS, HERTS.



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It began just like any other Christmas morning; the children up at dawn unpacking their presents; the postman's rat-a-tat at breakfast-time —more excitement. Then Father mysteriously disappeared. Where? Suddenly the crunch of wheels on the gravel drive, and Father with—A NEW STANDARD CAR! 'A Happy Christmas—family!' he cried. But we all knew that it meant much **more** *than that—for us all happy motoring for* **years** *to come!*

THE STANDARD SUPER TEN

4 forward hinged, fully opening doors. 4 cylinder, 948 c.c. engine. 40/50 miles per gallon. Maximum speed 68 miles per hour. Girling hydraulic brakes. Triplex toughened glass. Spacious luggage boot with separate compartment for spare wheel. Adjustable front seats Steel panelled body, rustproofed by Bonderising process and fully dustproofed.

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STANDARD CARS · TRIUMPH CARS · STANDARD COMMERCIAL VEHICLES · STANDARD DIESEL ENGINES · FERGUSON TRACTORS

You can tell a Vantella by its comfort, its room in the chest, its convenient coat-style cut. You recognize its good looks, its tidiness at neck and wrist. You know its refusal to wilt from wear or to shrink from the wash. (All credit there to the discipline of its **Van Heusen** collars, cuffs, neckband!) The price — **49/-** and well worth every penny!

You can Noël a **VANTELLA** Regd.

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DRY SACK

REGD.

The World Famous Sherry

SPAIN'S BEST

and of course— **WALNUT BROWN** *and* **CARLITO**

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AN **ADASTRA** CASUAL

WILL KEEP YOU WARM THIS WINTER

In hard-wearing 'Plusuede,' lined with Fur Fabric, this jacket is ideal for every outdoor occasion.

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FOR QUALITY

Faites Attention!

. . . take care when you wear this perfume — Cocktail Dry!

Like the subtle flavour of the connoisseur's cocktail, it is insidious— it goes straight to the head with unpredictable suddenness . . .

Not a perfume for the ingenue. But uninhibited outdoor personalities will appreciate the sweet-bitter tang of Patou's Cocktail Dry. And world-wise women who avoid the obvious in all things will immediately recognise its potent possibilities . . .

Cocktail Dry Perfume: ¼ oz. 27/-., ½ oz. 51/9., 1 oz. 87/9., 2 ozs. 157/6., De Luxe pack 90/-., Handbag size 37/6.

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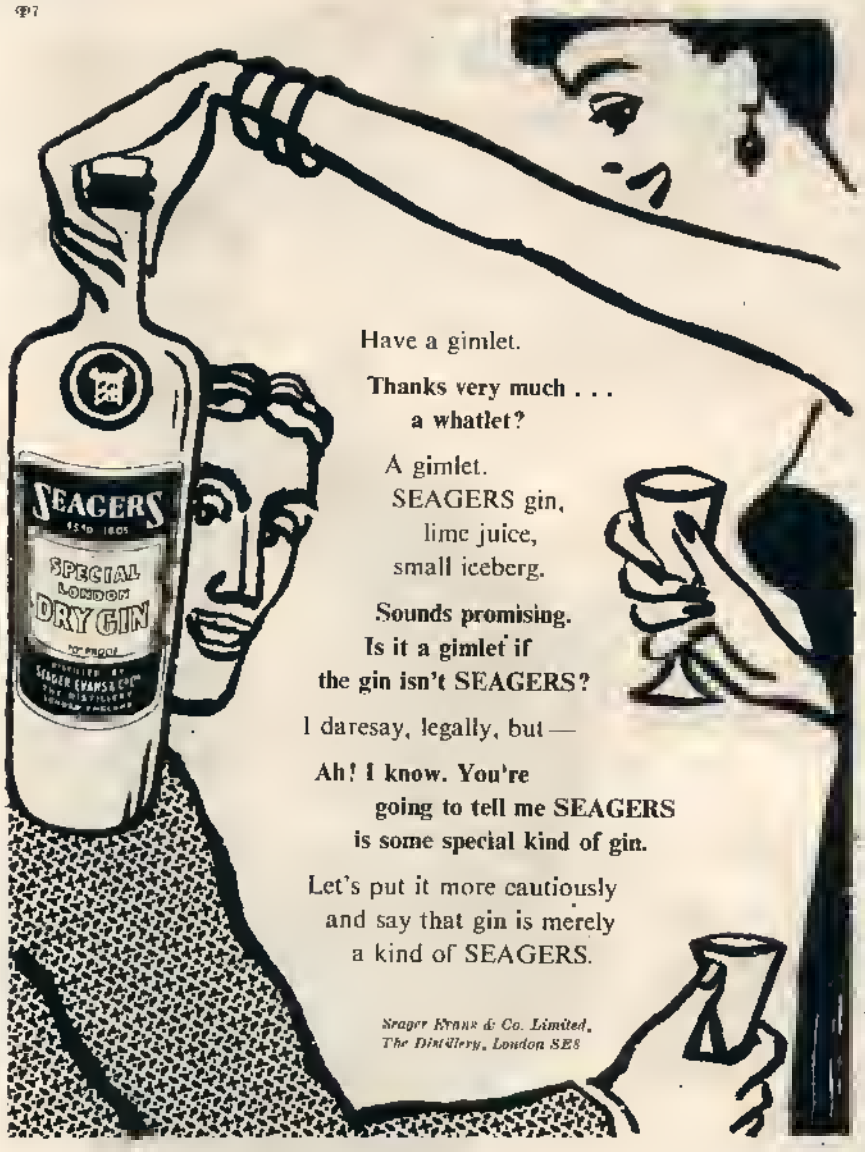

Have a gimlet.

Thanks very much . . . a whatlet?

A gimlet.
SEAGERS gin,
lime juice,
small iceberg.

Sounds promising. Is it a gimlet if the gin isn't SEAGERS?

I daresay, legally, but —

Ah! I know. You're going to tell me SEAGERS is some special kind of gin.

Let's put it more cautiously and say that gin is merely a kind of SEAGERS.

Seager Evans & Co. Limited, The Distillery, London SE8

Say "Noilly Prat" and your 'French' will be perfect!

Behind every bottle of Noilly Prat there's a tradition going back 150 years. A tradition that places quality above all else. It is not surprising then, that even in a world of changing values Noilly Prat is still the world's most-sought-after 'French'.

Here's why you'll prefer it —

★ Everything the French know in the growing of grapes, and blending of wines— is lavished on Noilly Prat.

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★ Noilly Prat is still bottled in France in the traditional *large* vermouth bottle.

NOILLY PRAT

Try this neat test

SHORT NOILLY PRAT
— neat with a zest of lemon peel squeezed into and then dropped into the vermouth.

LONG NOILLY PRAT
— two fingers of Noilly Prat, add ice, top with soda.

by insisting on gin and Noilly Prat you ensure getting 'Gin and French'

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AMERICAN SILVER

PAIR OF PORRINGERS
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—and thanks again for the Goblin Teasmade — every morning it will remind us of your kind thought for our comfort and happiness —

What a happy idea Goblin Teasmade is! Every morning to be wakened, on time in a ready lighted room with fresh-made tea (or coffee) ready at your bedside for enjoyment in cosy comfort. Goblin Teasmade does it all—automatically, and it's an electric clock as well. (Also useful for 'elevenses' and TV. intervals.) De Luxe Model (illus.) £16.14.9. P.T. paid (crockery excluded).

'POPULAR' MODEL
A modified design without tray or teapot but giving the same service.
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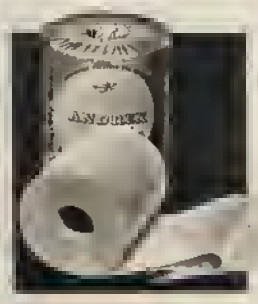
GOBLIN *Teasmade*

FROM ANY ELECTRICAL DEALER OR WRITE (DEPT. I.L.),
GOBLIN WORKS, LEATHERHEAD SURREY.

Cotton Wool **Soft**



If you think that all toilet tissue is crisp and shiny—or even if you believe it should be—try Andrex and change your mind. Andrex is so different, so soothing, so *cotton-wool* soft. It's the *only* tissue for babies and for folk with tender skin. Buy some and see; Andrex is obtainable in fully wrapped rolls—1/3 for a single pack, or 2/4 for the economical double pack, at all chemists and stores.

Ah! **ANDREX**
and what a difference

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Please be Father Christmas to our 7,000 and more children. Their happiness will be your reward.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT OF

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will feed one child for 4 days

Cheques, etc. (crossed), payable "Dr. Barnardo's Homes," should be sent to 92 Barnardo House, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

A NEW LIFE
at a Fairbridge Farm School in the Commonwealth.
CHRISTMAS—heralding new hope for mankind, is surely the time to provide happiness for a child in need.
Please send something—however little—towards the £30 it costs to give such a child a chance in life.

This appeal is made through the generosity of a friend.

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When considering those to whom you will extend "good cheer," will you send a gift to The Salvation Army for those less fortunate, outside the circle of your family and friends? Your help will be gratefully received at 113, Queen Victoria St., London, E.C.4

The Salvation Army

"Now good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both"
—Macbeth.

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Under present day stresses, more and more of us find acidity makes digestion difficult or unpleasant. 'Milk of Magnesia' Tablets, with their pleasant peppermint flavour, deal with this highly personal problem so promptly, unobtrusively and effectively that it is really no longer a problem at all.

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12 Tablets 10d - *75 Tablets* 3/- . .
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'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.

Please send a Christmas Gift to the

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Gifts should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Mr. Dickson Wright, F.R.C.S., at Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.

But . . . please don't forget the others!

There are nearly 5,000 children in our family who also hope their wishes will come true.
Will you be their SANTA CLAUS?

10/-

will help to provide Christmas fare for one child.

Christmas Donations gratefully received by the Secretary.

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(formerly **WAIFS AND STRAYS**)

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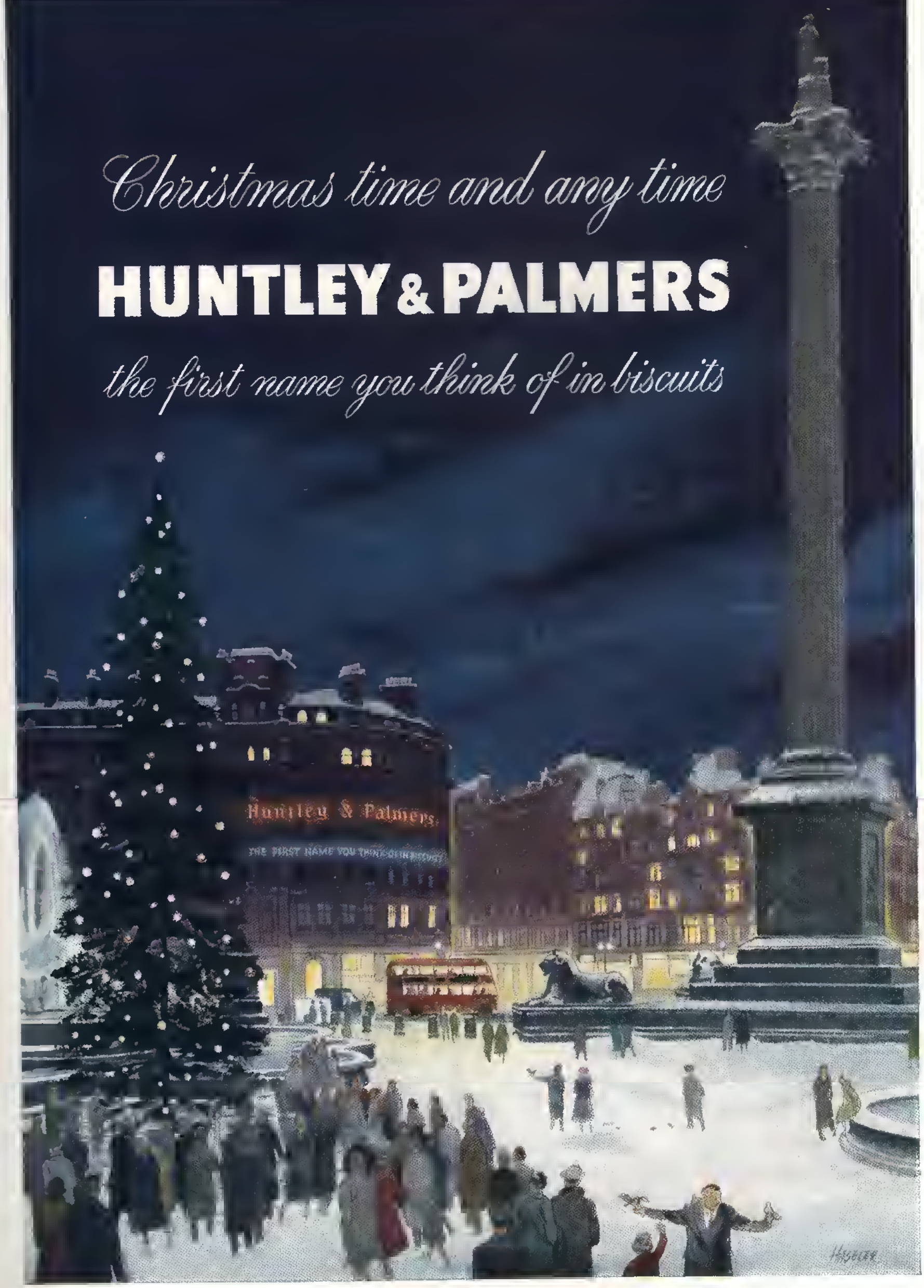
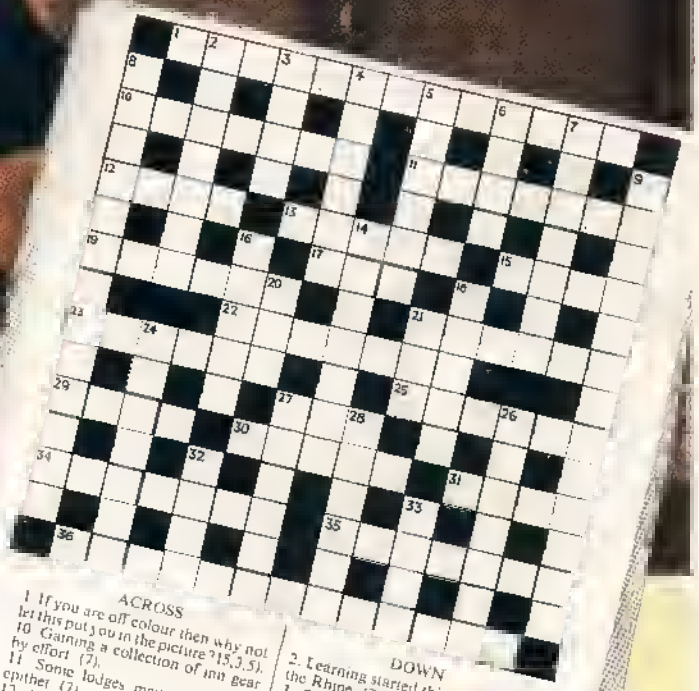
Christmas time and any time

HUNTLEY & PALMERS

the first name you think of in biscuits





ACROSS

1 If you are off colour then why not let this put you in the picture? (5,3,5).
10 Gaining a collection of unit gear by effort (7).
11 Some lodges may require this epithet (7).
12 A merry and cheerful air (4).
13 The right mixture with the right finish (5).
15 What is this has no superior (4) (3).
17 In need of good cheer, obviously (3).
19 A drink that, from its name, seems likely to create a stir (6)
21 One might think it a bit thick to be offered this as a pleasant drink. (6)
22 A description classically windy (7).
23 Last out, with a trying end (6)
25 It very easily gets lit up (6).
27 If you get the bird, shut up! (3).
29 They are as high up as their reversal is low down (4)
30 A town's alias as back to spirit it goes (5)
31 Not for a feature in ocean tides. (4)
34 He will not admit that absolute perfection is unattainable (7)
35 Do you remember the Frothblower's Chorus? This is a word from it. (7).
36. People whom we love to entertain. (7,6).

DOWN

2. Learning started this feature from the Rhine (7).
3 Orally double this feature when about to drink. (4)
4 These old coins should have been used for very good purposes only (6).
5 Mean makings in divine setting to ask for (6).
6 The entertaining fellow who likes 16 across. (4).
7 If you do not want to be done brown avoid such currency! (7).
8 That appeal to the palate that is born of maturity (6,7)
9 Canine friends that show a commendable spirit (5,8).
14. What is this cannot be the 23 across. (7).
16. Decree of United Kingdom on sea changes. (5).
18. To tuck in in bed would upset this bracer (5).
20 Part of a baby's layette. (3).
21 Something to go with a roll, at the right time and place. (3).
24 The polo equivalent of excellent. (3,4).
26. He is usually looking down in the mouth, poor fellow. (7).
27. He is certainly unchristian, and may nip if disturbed. (6).
28. Its use is no new fashion in the kitchen, nevertheless this seasons. (6).
32. Try this over to find out. (4).
33. Not confined to description of what even paupers can have. (4).

To friends everywhere we send hearty Christmas and New Year greetings and offer this crossword for amusement and relaxation.

'BLACK & WHITE'
SCOTCH WHISKY
The Secret is in the Blending

JAMES BUCHANAN & CO. LTD., Glasgow and London

For the solution to this crossword please turn to page 44

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